

# DRAMATIC PIECES

CALCULATED TO

EXEMPLIFY THE MODE OF CONDUCT WHICH  
WILL RENDER

*YOUNG LADIES*

BOTH AMIABLE AND HAPPY, WHEN THEIR  
SCHOOL EDUCATION IS COMPLETED.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

*Volume III.*

CONTAINING THE

TRIUMPH OF REASON,

AND THE

C O N T R A S T.

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L O N D O N:

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DOCTRINE OF THE CROSS

THE DOCTRINE OF THE CROSS  
OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

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## P R E F A C E.

**I**N the first of those *Dramatic Pieces*, which constitute the present volume, I have endeavoured to point out the *folly* and *odiousness* of *pride*, the *beauty* and *amiableness* of *humility*, and the advantages which may be derived from the different acquirements of a liberal education, in a *state of adversity*. In the second, an attempt is made to exhibit a strik-

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ing *contrast* between the manners of a daughter, brought up under the tuition of a sensible and tender mother, and those of a poor young creature, who is supposed to have been banished by a mistaken parent to a foreign land, where she wasted some of her most valuable years in the acquisition of *vanity*, *conceit*, and *pertness*, under the idea of *politeness* and *refinement*.

It is really wonderful to think, how parents can thus bring themselves to send their children from under the eye of tenderness, and watchful solicitude? At *nine* or *ten* years of age, many girls are separated from every relation or friend, who would  
kindly

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kindly correct their growing errors, and are placed as boarders in *convents*. It is the interest of the Superiors to send the most flattering accounts of the dispositions and improvements of those committed to their care. The mother is naturally precluded from any knowledge of the real *truth*, neither can she ascertain the treatment which her child meets with, who is submitted to the *chance* of becoming the object of *ill-natured severity*, without an affectionate friend to sooth her affliction, or redress her grievances. But these are trifling considerations, in comparison with a still greater danger to which children, sent for education to a *catholic country*, are exposed.

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posed. That of imbibing the principles of an *erroneous* and *superstitious religion*; one great *tenet* of which is, *the merit of making converts*. How then can it be expected, that the zealous professors of it, will forbear employing their endeavours to bias those tender minds which are thus exposed to their delusions? But allowing that the persons entrusted with the children of *Protestants* are *true to their trust*, what better can be expected, than that their *pupils* return home without *any religion at all*?

Having in this volume brought my work to a conclusion, I must entreat my Readers to consider it, as particularly intended for *young ladies just entering*



*entering into the world*, who are supposed to be preparing themselves for those relations in life, which it is natural for them to look forward to. For *their* benefit only, have I been induced to bring forth to view, the *faults of parents*. I hope it will appear, from the execution of my plan, that nothing is farther from my design than the exciting in young female minds, *premature thoughts of love and marriage*; though I do not agree in opinion with many parents, who would on no account converse on those subjects with their daughters, till they are just entering the marriage state. Under proper regulations they ought frequently to be referred to,



to, so far, I mean, as is necessary to point out the errors which prove fatal to the happiness of numbers, that young ladies may know, before they engage in the most important connections of life, the danger of *improper conduct*; and be qualified when they have an opportunity of marrying with a good prospect, and the full consent of their friends, to make a "well-ordered home, their husbands best delight." To instruct their children, govern their servants, and regulate their expences; instead of fancying, as is too frequently the case with the *modern fair*, that when they leave school they have nothing to do but to *display* their *beauty* and  
accom-

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*accomplishments, to adorn their persons, in order to gain admiration, and to run the giddy round of incessant amusement. Wretched must be the man who calls such an one his wife ! miserable the lot of her neglected children !*

P. I.

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T H E  
TRIUMPH OF REASON,  
A D R A M A,  
I N T H R E E A C T S.

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B



## PERSONS of the DRAMA.

Mrs. ALLWORTHY.

Mrs. FREEMAN.

Miss FREEMAN, aged 14.

Miss CLARA FREEMAN, 13.

Miss FOLEY, 16.

Miss HARRIET FOLEY, 14.

Servants and Attendants.

THE  
TRIUMPH OF REASON,  
A DRAMA, IN THREE ACTS.

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A C T I.

SCENE, *a Parlour,*

[*Miss Clara Freeman sitting at work, enter Miss Freeman in great haste.*]

*Miss FREEMAN.*

O, SISTER, you are here! I have been seeking you this half hour, that we might be together when the mantua-maker comes to try on our new dresses.

B 2

*Miss*

*Miss CLARA.*

I am at present very busy in making the children's things.

*Miss FREEMAN.*

That is an employment in which you will never receive any assistance from me ; I should not have thought of troubling myself about a parcel of tiresome brats.

*Miss CLARA.*

You were once a little brat, as you call it, yourself ; what would have become of you if every body had been of your opinion ?

*Miss FREEMAN.*

O, but I was the eldest, and a rarity—and had people enow to wait upon me ? and so ought my brothers and sisters to have—for mamma cannot reasonably expect that I should throw my time away upon them.

*Miss CLARA.*

And yet, how do we in all companies hear *Miss Trueworth* praised, because she takes so much pains with her brothers and sisters, and teaches them every thing they learn ?

*Miss*

Miss FREEMAN.

That may do very well for her, who has no great fortune to boast of—but my papa, though he is a *tradesman*, has money enough for a *lord*; and my aunt told me, he could make us as rich as *ladies*.

Miss CLARA.

It may be so, but mamma teaches a different lesson; she says, we had better be *good* than *great*, and that *humility* is a most amiable virtue,

Miss FREEMAN.

Do you know the reason of that? because she herself had no fortune, but was a pennyless colonel's daughter, and, therefore, as my aunt told me, she despises money.

Miss CLARA.

I am sure mamma is the most agreeable woman I ever saw. She is so gentle and kind to every one, I think it very strange that my aunt should have spoken against her, and to her own child too!

Miss FREEMAN.

I do not see much harm in what my aunt said. When papa consented to my living with her, she endeavoured to eradicate many sentiments which dis-



ferred from her own; It was natural for her to try to persuade me to think like herself.

*Miss CLARA.*

Perhaps so. But I know your going to live with her was contrary to mamma's inclination, and I have often seen her shed tears about it.

*Miss FREEMAN.*

I am only sorry my poor aunt died, which obliged me to return home, for I shall never be so happy again as I was with her. Mamma confines me, and will not let me have a variety of fine cloaths. I was forced to get at papa alone, and coax him to consent to our going to Monsieur *De Fierville's* ball, and to allow us new dresses for the occasion; and I can perceive that mamma is displeased because I have gained my point.

*Miss CLARA.*

Fie! *Matilda*, you accuse my dear mother very wrongfully; indeed she is delighted to give us pleasure under proper restrictions; and surely she must be a better judge of propriety than either you or I can pretend to be.

*Miss*

*Miss* FREEMAN.

Perhaps so; but her notions are very strange. The other day she chid me for not giving Mrs. *Molly*, the housemaid, an answer. Why, I cannot think there is any necessity for shewing civility to such sort of people.

*Miss* CLARA.

And I should be ashamed of treating them otherwise than civilly. Whilst they do their duty, they have a right to our regard; and the best method of insuring respect from them, is setting a good example, which cannot be done without feeling both for them and ourselves.

*Miss* FREEMAN.

Well, I always treated my aunt's servants just as I pleased, and they were forced to submit to it: sometimes I made them play with me, and at other times, used them as ill as ever I could.

*Miss* CLARA.

I should be ashamed, even if mamma permitted it, to act so by any body inferior to me; if they are *honest*, they are as good as I am, and much more *necessary*.

*Miss*

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*Miss FREEMAN.*

So are the cat and the dog, I consider them all on a footing.

*Miss CLARA.*

Christians to be looked on in such a light! indeed sister, you shock me. I never made *companions* of the servants; but if they behaved well, always thought them full as worthy as myself.

*Miss FREEMAN.*

So do not I: but you have no *spirit*. I suppose, the other afternoon, you would have submitted to Miss *Foley's* sitting above us; yet I soon sent the lady to her proper station.

*Miss CLARA.*

To confess the truth, I never was so much confused in my life as at your conduct on that occasion; for, I am sure, *Harriet Foley* would not for the world, be guilty of rudeness to any one.

*Miss FREEMAN.*

What business had she to sit herself *above me*? I shall always act so by every body I think beneath me.

*Miss*

Miss CLARA.

Mamma sets us a very different example; and yet she is every where treated with great respect.

Miss FREEMAN.

To be sure. Does not *money make the man*; and has not mamma an elegant coach, a great house, and riches enough to outdo most of her neighbours?

Miss CLARA.

But she does not plume herself upon these advantages. You know, "*the humble shall be exalted.*"

Miss FREEMAN.

And "*the exalted may be abased for me.*" I shall never think of such precepts while I am *rich*, and *poor* I cannot be; for I know my aunt left me handsomely.

Miss CLARA.

I never heard so much about *riches* before; my mamma has always armed my mind to bear a *reverse* of fortune, and I think papa must have had great losses lately, or he would not have discharged several servants, and given up his house in the country.

Miss



Miss FREEMAN.

It will be horrid indeed, if he reduces his circumstances; though it will not trouble me, for he must always support me as I have been used to live; I cannot submit to a *reverse*.

Miss CLARA.

It would be a great shame if we murmured at any employment which my mamma sets us the example of. To save her trouble, I offered to make these frocks, as the maid, who used to work for the children, is one of those who are discharged.

Miss FREEMAN.

One comfort is, I do not know how either to make or mend, and I am not ambitious of learning, believe me.

Miss CLARA.

I never saw my mamma at such employment till very lately, yet she does it with as much cheerfulness as embroidery, or any other fancy work.

Miss FREEMAN.

To tell you the truth, *I hate work*, nor *will* I do any. My aunt never made me, and why should any other person?

Miss

Miss CLARA.

And I cannot bear *idleness*. My mamma's example has taught me to love employment, and I am by that means, free from the danger of having my time ever hang heavily on my hands.

Miss FREEMAN.

I have found time sadly heavy since my return home, but never did so at my aunt's; for there I used, when tired of the *parlour*, to go into the *kitchen*, or *garden*, and make the servants romp with me; but now it is in vain to speak to a domestic, for they have orders not to hold conversation, or be more with me than their business requires, on pain of losing their places.

Miss CLARA.

You wasted time in passing it so unprofitably; the attention to my education, mamma's conversation, and playing with the little ones, fills up all my hours without leaving a moment to spare. Apropos, have you seen the fan mounts I painted, let me shew them to you.

[She takes them from a large port folio, and spreads them on the table.]

Miss

Miss FREEMAN.

They look pretty ; but I do not understand any thing about painting, nor can I discover what use there is in young ladies of fortune knowing how to draw.

Miss CLARA.

It is the pleasanter employment imaginable, and assists us in discerning the bountiful goodness of our Creator, who gave us such beautiful flowers and plants to gratify our senses of seeing and smelling.

Miss FREEMAN.

I do not *like* flowers, and therefore never regard them ; indeed, the *very sweet ones* make me *faint*.

Miss CLARA.

There are some too powerfully fragrant for a room, but in the open air their odours are delightful.

Miss FREEMAN,

You talk very affectedly on this subject, I think ; pray who taught you ?

Miss CLARA.

My ever dear mamma, she is never tired of studying the beauties of nature, nor I of being instructed by her.

Miss

Miss FREEMAN.

But you cannot paint from the flowers?

Miss CLARA.

Yes, I do; and am so entertained, that it is with regret I leave off. Try to draw, sister, and you will be as fond of it as I am.

Miss FREEMAN.

I could never discover one charm in any thing that required taking pains, and shall not begin now. I had masters, but would not attend to them.

Miss CLARA.

My mamma was my instructress: perhaps, had you been taught by her, your aversion to learning would have ceased.

Miss FREEMAN.

I believe not. For with all mamma's boasted cleverness, I cannot suppose her quite so capable of teaching as masters are who gain their livelihood by it.

Miss CLARA.

She might not be *more capable*, but I see no reason to doubt her being on an *equality* with them; what *one* person can learn, *another* may; and it is visible

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that

Miss



that my mamma is elegantly accomplished, though she only shews it for the advantage of her children.

*Miss FREEMAN.*

From whence you infer, that you are as clever as any young lady can be?

*Miss CLARA.*

You pervert my meaning strangely, *Matilda*. I hope I am not so conceited; but if my capacity is a good one, I see no reason why I may not improve as well under my mamma's tuition as under any master's whatever,

*Miss FREEMAN.*

Mamma has done one thing to gratify herself, she has taught you to have as high an opinion of her cleverness as she has; my aunt instructed me otherwise.

*Miss CLARA.*

We seem to differ on a very material point, and therefore had better never mention it again. I reverence my mother, she is kindness itself; I never yet saw any person equal to her; but that probably is owing to my not having opportunity of observing other people's actions so clearly as I do her's. Her  
mind

mind is composed of *gentleness, charity, and humanity.*

*Miss* FREEMAN.

You are quite in heroics ; and had better write a poem in praise of her.

*Miss* CLARA.

If I were *capable*, I could not chuse a more pleasing subject.

[*Enter Mary.*]

MARY.

The mantua-maker is come, ladies, and begs to know if you are ready to have your cloaths fitted ?

*Miss* FREEMAN.

Ready ! She has kept me waiting for her these two hours—order her to walk in.

[*The maid goes out.*]

*Miss* CLARA.

Pray, sister, do not shew any displeasure to poor Mrs. *Gates*. Consider she was once a gentlewoman, and that she is now desirous to oblige every body.

*Miss* FREEMAN.

And is that a reason I am to be confined here attending her leisure. I shall tell her my mind indeed.

Miss CLARA.

Let me entreat you to have more compassion. If she is wrong, it is mamma's place to reprove her, and not ours.

[Enter Mrs. Gates.]

Miss FREEMAN, [to her sister.]

I tell you, I will not be controiled.—A fine time you have made us wait, madam; you did not dare do so at my aunt's, she would soon have turned you off if you had.

Mrs. GATES.

I was detained at Lady Jenkins's longer than I expected; her ladyship was kind enough to beg of me, as a favor, to stay half an hour for her; how then could I refuse? Yet I beg your pardon, ladies, if it has materially interfered with your employment, I am sincerely sorry for it.

Miss FREEMAN.

And what compensation is begging our pardon? I insist on its never happening again. Have not you prepared my dress for putting on. Prithee, hurry yourself a little more.

[Mrs. Gates puts it on, and takes great pains to make it set neatly.]

Miss

Miss FREEMAN.

How horridly it is made—no taste—the train is frightful. I wish mamma had been persuaded. I did all I could to have a better mantua-maker.

Mrs. GATES.

I have taken a great deal of pains to make it fashionable; and Lady Mary Bennet lent me the one she wore at the *Festino*, as a pattern.

Miss FREEMAN.

Perhaps you have made it as well as you could, but it is second hand work, in my opinion.

Mrs. GATES, [*Turning to Miss CLARA.*]

Do you think it wants any improvement, madam?

Miss CLARA.

I am not sufficiently accustomed to fashionable dresses to be a competent judge; but it appears, in my eyes, very complete indeed. However, my mamma is the properest person to determine, and she is in her dressing room: had you not better go to her, Matilda?

Miss FREEMAN.

I suppose I must. But my opinion of her taste does not exceed that of Mrs. Gates's; for how



should she know fashions, who goes so seldom to public places?

[*Miss Freeman goes out.*]

Mrs. GATES.

Shall I have the honor of fitting your dress now?

*Miss CLARA.*

If you please, Mrs. Gates. I do not mean to detain you, but I am afraid you are fatigued, had you not better rest yourself first?—pray sit down;—nay, I insist upon it.

Mrs. GATES.

Your goodness, worthy young lady, oppresses me. I really am not fatigued, or I would avail myself of your kind attention to me.

*Miss CLARA.*

—We will, then, begin as soon as you please. [*She puts on her new dress.*] It appears to fit extremely well, and is neatly and elegantly made; yet this sleeve is somewhat too large, do you not think so?

Mrs. GATES.

I think it is, and will take care to alter it. Indeed, Miss Clara, I have a pleasure in working for you; but your sister treats me with such haughtiness, that I am sometimes tempted to give up attending her,

her, and but for your obliging behaviour to me I certainly should do so.

*Miss CLARA.*

If you knew my sister better, your opinion of her would alter; she does not mean to wound you, it is only *her manner*. I will just go and take my mamma's opinion. [*As she is going out,*

*Enter Mrs. and Miss Freeman.]*

*Mrs. FREEMAN.*

Good morning to you, Mrs. Gates, I hope you are well? have you rested a little? for I know you take long walks.

*Mrs. GATES.*

It would ill-become one, in my reduced circumstances, madam, and with a young family, to indulge in coach hire. I am thankful that I can maintain myself and little ones, without being burthen-some to any one.

*Mrs. FREEMAN.*

Honest industry seldom wants encouragement. I am glad you have employment enough to gratify your wishes.

*Mrs.*

Mrs. GATES.

You are all goodness, madam; but your kind condescension is shewn to one, who is grateful for your favors. Do you approve of the young ladies cloaths?

Mrs. FREEMAN.

Very much. *Matilda's* only wants the train to flow more behind; and *Clara's* to be made narrower in the back.

Mrs. GATES.

I will be attentive to your commands.

[*She assists in taking off their things.*]

Miss FREEMAN, [*impatiently.*]

Do not pull off my arms, woman. How awkward you are; there, get away, or you will take part of *me*.

Miss CLARA.

There is a pin in the way, I will be obliged to you to remove it,—thank you.

Mrs. GATES.

[*Takes up her parcel, and makes a respectful curtesy.*]

Ladies, your servant.

Miss

Mrs. FREEMAN.

Good morning to you.

[*Miss Clara curtesies to her. She goes out.*]

Miss FREEMAN, [*Bursting into a loud laugh*].

Are you practising, Clara? for you could not have made a finer obeisance to the QUEEN.

Miss CLARA.

I was not conscious of any thing ridiculous, sister, but am glad to see you so merry.

Miss FREEMAN.

Merry! why who can help being diverted at seeing you so mighty complaisant to that woman?

Mrs. FREEMAN.

Is an act of *common civility* so very extraordinary then?

Miss FREEMAN.

But to a mantua-maker, madam! why, she will thank the servants by-and-by for doing their duty.

Mrs. FREEMAN.

I hope so. She will at least treat them with kindness; even servants may behave so as to deserve thanks. If *Matilda* acts properly, the advantage will be her own; for, giving encouragement where it is due,



due, secure her respect. But in this instance, the heart must be ill formed that could lead any one to forget the misfortunes which reduced poor Mrs. *Gates* to her present situation : yet, while we pity her distress, we must honor the fortitude that has set her above it, and made her prefer gaining her bread by virtuous industry, to becoming the flatterer of empty pride with a view of gaining a livelihood among the great.

*Miss* FREEMAN.

I do not comprehend your meaning, mamma ; but think it very strange, to prefer acquiring one's livelihood by work, to a situation that sets one above being looked upon in so mean a light.

*Mrs.* FREEMAN.

You do indeed strangely mistake the matter, my dear *Matilda*, to think stooping to dependence less mean, than engaging in an honest employment. All good people esteem Mrs. *Gates* highly, and honor the laudable pride that has raised her above her misfortunes. There are two kinds of pride, the *false* and the *proper* ; nor can I describe them better than by assuring you, that *she* possesses the *right*, and *you* the *wrong*.

*Miss*

Miss FREEMAN.

Why am I to blame for not working, when there is no occasion for me to do it?

Mrs. FREEMAN.

At least you are to blame, for despising, and treating with haughtiness, a worthy, amiable woman, only because she makes your gowns. A woman who was better *born*, and as *well educated* as yourself.

Miss FREEMAN.

My aunt always judged as I do. She never liked any body that was *poor*, because she thought them *mean*.

Mrs. FREEMAN.

Meanness is not a necessary attendant on poverty. Your aunt is dead, and her faults ought to be buried in oblivion. Truly am I concerned, that through the narrowness of her mind, she has so greatly contracted your's; yet, I hope, precept and observation, will overcome the prejudices of education.—Would your father's becoming poor make me less a gentlewoman?

Miss

Miss FREEMAN.

I do not know.

Mrs. FREEMAN.

Then you *doubt*. Let me, therefore, endeavour to convince your *reason*, by relating two examples of people personally known to you. To begin with Mrs. *Gates*, her husband was a gentleman of fortune, but unhappily fond of *shew* and *parade*; he lived to squander away his whole estate, among people who only despised, though they assisted to ruin him; at his death she was left destitute with three young children. All her acquaintance of high rank forsook her; some few friends remained, but they were such as you would call *mean*, because they were not *rich*. These solicited relief for her, from her husband's former intimates. They all turned a deaf ear, except one great lady, who offered to give her the run of her house, that is to *feed her*; in return for which, she was to *flatter her absurdities*, and even her *vices*. Her children were to be put out to service as they grew up. Mrs. *Gates* despised the *offer* and the *offerer*; and with the advice and commendation of her more humble friends, she undertook

dertook her present employment, in which she has happily succeeded, and is regarded, and respected by the *good*, whether of *high* or *low* degree. Mrs. Coombs, who you know lives with Lady Harris, was reduced also by the extravagance of others; yet rather than undertake any thing like *work*, she submitted to become her ladyship's *humble friend*. You have often remarked the cruel treatment she receives even before us, who visit Lady Harris, merely on a footing of formality. Now tell me, *Matilda*, which of these two persons is the most *respectable* character and possesses the *propereſt pride*?

Miss FREEMAN.

As you relate it, Mrs. Gates is undoubtedly the best, and the happiest. But if my *papa* were to lose his fortune, I do not know what would become of *me*, for I am certain I could not follow her example.

Mrs. FREEMAN.

It cannot be pleasing to you, young as you are, to dwell upon such a thought. Yet [*sighs*] it is a misfortune very likely to happen. Your *papa* carries on an extensive trade, and his success depends



more frequently on others, or even on the uncertain elements, than on himself. It is therefore the duty of all connected with him, to arm their minds for a reverse; and I would wish you to consider things in a proper light, that you may be strengthened to support a misfortune, which it will probably be your portion to bear.

Miss FREEMAN.

I shall always have my aunt's fortune; that, the servants assured me she had left entirely to me.

Mrs. FREEMAN, [*Taking her hand.*]

Dear girl, how you distress me! so young, and yet so eager after fortune! with pain to myself must I undeceive you. Your aunt had *nothing to leave*; she lived on an *annuity* which ceased with her life; a few ornaments were all she had to bequeath, and those are your's.

Miss FREEMAN.

Well, I cannot believe that papa will ever make himself poor; and I hope, mamma, I am to wear all my new things at the ball?

Mrs. FREEMAN.

I have not thought about it yet. But depend on it, if you go, you shall be dressed properly.—Clara,  
you

you work very hard ; your assistance relieves and obliges me, my dear girl. If your father and I were reduced to poverty, what would you do to assist us, and your brothers and sisters ?

*Miss CLARA.*

I would work for you, and paint screens and fan-mounts, and embroider muffs and waistcoats, and would give you all the money I acquired.

*Mrs. FREEMAN.*

I thought so. Well, my beloved girls, we must hope for the best, and may God direct us, if called to so severe a trial ! your talents, if not requisite to assist, will always be a sure refuge to yourselves, from the weariness of solitude, and make you *never less alone, than when alone*. But I must not spend any more time in talking with you at present. When you wish to see me, you will find me in my dressing room.

*[She goes out.]*

*Miss CLARA [bursts into tears.]*

I am certain, mamma, is extremely unhappy ; what will become of me, if I see my parents in distress ?

*Miss FREEMAN.*

It is time enough to think of it when it happens. You will be a pretty figure for the ball to-morrow night, with a crying countenance !

*Miss CLARA.*

I shall not be much disposed for merriment, unless I see a visible alteration in mamma. It is a great comfort though, that I can earn money, if misfortunes should happen, how much you will, *Martilda*, lament the neglect of your education !

*Miss FREEMAN.*

Do not talk of it. I shall never dare to look the young ladies in the face to whom I have behaved so haughtily, they will exult in my losing what I valued myself upon.

*Miss CLARA.*

Make it a lesson then in future, to study how to bear a fall, and believe an affectionate sister, that you never appear so unpleasing as when you behave *proudly*.

*Miss FREEMAN.*

The example is set me, by almost all my acquaintance ; and why am I to be different from the rest of the world ?

Miss CLARA.

Did you ever think a haughty behaviour appeared amiable in any one person? I cannot think who you have associated with; I see but few such characters among my acquaintances.

Miss FREEMAN.

I never considered it. But I had no notion of giving up to people no better than myself.

Miss CLARA.

I am not equal to holding an argument on this subject; my mamma, will, no doubt, tell you her sentiments, as she has me; and soon convince you, that you will shew more good sense by *submitting to others*, than by *contending*. I have done my work now, and will carry it into the nursery. Shall we go together?

Miss FREEMAN.

With all my heart. I can play with the children, though I will not work for them.

[*They go out.*]

[*The Scene closes.*]

END of ACT I.



## A C T II.

SCENE, *A Dressing Room.*

*Mrs. Freeman alone, in a very disconsolate posture.  
After a time, she speaks.*

Mrs. FREEMAN.

WHY cannot I raise my mind above the anxiety of the present moment? If poor Mr. Freeman's late losses are as great as he apprehends, I know the worst that can happen; with patience will I submit, even to the lowest humiliation, for his, and my children's sake, and it is for them, more than for myself, I grieve.

[*Enter a Servant.*]

SERVANT.

Mrs. *Allworthy* is below, madam.

Mrs.

Mrs. FREEMAN.

Desire her to walk up. I do not stand on ceremony with her. [*Footman goes out.*]

Good creature! report has conveyed the news of our misfortunes to her ears, and she is come to console me.

[*Enter Mrs. Allworthy.*]

Mrs. ALLWORTHY.

How are you, my dear madam? I hope my company is not an intrusion?

Mrs. FREEMAN.

Far from it, madam: such a friend as Mrs. Allworthy, is always welcome. Nor would you have talked of intrusion, had not rumour been already busy, and informed you—something disquiets me.

Mrs. ALLWORTHY.

I have heard more than I hope is true. To assist you as far as I have power brought me hither. Though your own excellent judgement will direct you better than I can do,

Mr

Mrs. FREEMAN.

I have nothing to resolve on but *submission*. We know not the extent of our losses. Mr. *Freeman* went immediately after dinner to make personal enquiries about his property, which now hangs on so slender a twig, as our ships, uninsured, escaping a hurricane which has happened in the West-Indies.

Mrs. ALLWORTHY.

Then you have still the support of hope; and even should the worst happen, Mr. *Freeman* has so active a mind, that he will never rest until he is in a situation to retrieve his losses, and regain his fortune.

Mrs. FREEMAN.

You comfort me agreeably. And, indeed, I believe he will pursue fortune, as long as life is spared. Men in business, with active minds, seldom give up. I know too well the value of money to despise it. But believe me, my concern is not for *myself*; I see too many instances of happiness, with a moderate competency, not to be perfectly content with it, if that remains.

Mrs. ALLWORTHY.

Are your daughters acquainted with your present distress?

Mrs. FREEMAN.

Not thoroughly. Yet my dear *Clara* guesses a great deal from my looks; her attention to which discovers more, than I wish her to know.

Mrs. ALLWORTHY.

And why not inform them? they are of an age to be your comforters, and may, if necessary, contribute to your support.

Mrs. FREEMAN.

I have no reason to doubt the goodness of their hearts. *Matilda* indeed has imbibed opinions I wish to alter; and perhaps this early rub in life, may assist to refine a mind that has been led wrong by one whom she was taught to reverence.

Mrs. ALLWORTHY.

Under your management I doubt not its proving to her advantage; and as she is not deficient in understanding, your endeavours will reconcile her to that which is right.

Mr



Mrs. FREEMAN.

Poor girl! she will be sadly chagrined at her not going to her dancing master's ball to-morrow night. I dread disappointing her; yet, in our present situation, it would be exceedingly improper to permit my daughters to go to a place of public entertainment.

Mrs. ALLWORTHY.

Certainly. Command me as an assistant on this unpleasant occasion.

Mrs. FREEMAN.

They will come with the tea. I was unable to attend as usual to my little ones, and desired your god-daughter to hear them their lessons. *Matilda*, had no occasion for having an employment given her; the milliner and mantua-maker, had just sent home her new dresses and ornaments for the ball, and I could not draw her from the admiration of them.

Mrs. ALLWORTHY.

I pity her disappointment, while I feel the necessity of it, and think the present pain may prove in the event a source of real joy.

Mrs.

Mrs. FREEMAN.

My prayers will be sincere for this blessed effect !  
had I placed my dependence on what her infatuated  
aunt taught her to do, despondence and horror  
would now have been my lot.

Mrs. ALLWORTHY.

How cruel are those parents who lead their children on in unthinking security ! Never taught to look beyond the present moment, or to observe the changes which so frequently happen in this fluctuating world, the bitter pangs of disappointment come suddenly upon them, and their unprepared minds sink under misfortunes, that did they but know how to receive them properly, might in the end turn to blessings, by giving them an opportunity of submitting, as their duty requires, to the decrees of an all-wise Providence, who never fails to comfort those who resign themselves to his will.

[Enter Footman, and places the tea things.]

Mrs. FREEMAN.

Let Miss *Freeman* and Miss *Clara* know that  
tea is ready.

[He goes out.]

Mrs.

Mrs. FREEMAN.

O ! my overcharged heart ! [*bursts into tears.*] This is a relief I greatly stood in need of, and will, I trust, enable me to perform my duty, in setting an example to my children. [*Mrs. Freeman wipes away her tears.*]

[*Enter Miss Clara.*]

Miss CLARA.

I have very good accounts to give you, mamma ; the little ones have all been good this afternoon, and obeyed me in every thing.

Mrs. FREEMAN.

Your report delights me, *Clara* ; but my dear, how comes it to pass, that you do not take notice of one of your best friends ?

Miss CLARA, [*seeing Mrs. Allworthy.*]

My dear god-mamma ! only think of my heedlessness ! but it was owing to the desire I had of giving mamma pleasure.

Mrs. ALLWORTHY.

Such a laudable motive requires commendation, as well as secures pardon, for what was only an oversight. God bless you, my beloved girl, and may you ha

you ever deserve my affection by such dutiful attention to the wishes of your worthy mother!

*Mrs. FREEMAN.*

Where is your sister? I ordered *John* to inform her that we waited tea.

*Miss CLARA.*

He did. But she has locked herself into her room, and would not admit me, but desired me to say, she was coming presently.

*Mrs. FREEMAN.*

I must begin now to new model her; but must first endeavour to convince her, that I ought to regulate all her actions.—Make the tea, my dear.

*Mrs. ALLWORTHY.*

I hear, *Miss Clara*, you are going to a ball, and that your papa has been so good as to give you new cloaths to appear in.

*Miss CLARA.*

He has, madam; and they are all come home this afternoon, but I have not yet had time to examine them.

*Mrs. ALLWORTHY.*

What would you do, if any circumstance should happen to disappoint you of going to this ball?



MISS CLARA.

Be much concerned to be sure; but it would be for the *cause* of the disappointment; as nothing but a *misfortune* to some of the family could occasion it: for papa and mamma are so indulgent to us, that they would not suffer a trifle to prevent our enjoyment of such a pleasure.

Mrs. ALLWORTHY.

You distinguish very *justly*, my sweet girl: yet in all cases of sorrow, you must submit with patience because it is your duty to do so. Misfortunes are often such as no human foresight could prevent but the goodness of God enables us to overcome what unavailing tears and complaining only increase.

MISS CLARA.

My life has hitherto been a very *happy* one; but I am not from thence to infer, that it will always continue so. I can, thanks to dear mamma's care do a great many things towards gaining a livelihood, if papa should lose his fortune.

Mrs. ALLWORTHY.

I am delighted to hear it. Pray inform me what your genius is most inclined to?

Miss

*Miss CLARA [blushes.]*

O, madam. I did not mean to appear conceited ; but you know mamma has taught me to *draw* and *paint*, and do all kinds of *fancy work*.

*Mrs. ALLWORTHY.*

And how will you make that useful, supposing the worst should happen ?

*Miss CLARA.*

In every way I can. I will paint and work fan-mounts and screens, embroider gentlemen's waist-coats, and work-bags and muffs for the ladies—I can also make work-baskets, and Pool-dishes ; and when mamma requires it, I can assist in mending my little brothers and sisters cloaths.

*Mrs. ALLWORTHY.*

I am glad to hear, my dear, that you have profited so much by your mamma's example ; and do not doubt, every proper exertion of it, should circumstances make it necessary, which I sincerely hope will not be the case.

*Miss*

Miss CLARA.

I do not think I should make myself very miserable if we were reduced ; that is, if we had enough left to live *altogether* ; it would only be the difference of a *large* and a *small* house ; of a *few*, instead of a *great many* servants. I would wait upon mamma, and supply her own maid's place, for I can dress hair very tolerably.

Mrs. ALLWORTHY.

You can do very well for one so young ; but could you submit to being placed at a *trade* for life ?

Miss CLARA [*startled.*]

I should not like to be separated from my mamma. Though, if Mrs. Gates would take me, I *think*, nay, I am *certain*, I could submit to gain my bread as a mantua-maker.

Mrs. FREEMAN.

Go, my love, and tell *Matilda* I am offended at her not coming when I send for her.

[*Clara goes out.*]

Her innocent conversation distresses, whilst it delights me. Blessed with such a daughter, I ought

not

not to repine at any misfortune, which is not brought on by my own imprudence or impropriety of conduct.

[Enter Miss FREEMAN dressed in all her new cloaths, with a profusion of feathers, flowers, &c. on her head, followed by her sister.]

Miss FREEMAN.

There mamma, look how charmingly my dress is made; and see what an elegant cap Madam Buffon has sent me. O what *taste* the French milliners have!

Mrs. FREEMAN.

I am sorry, *Matilda*, to see you so fond of dress, and could I have supposed you capable of trifling over new cloaths a whole afternoon, I would never have consented to your having them. I blush that you should be capable of exposing yourself, not only to me, but before Mrs. *Allworthy*.

Mrs. ALLWORTHY.

I see *Matilda's* faults with great concern Miss; yet I think she will be persuaded to overcome them.



Miss FREEMAN.

I never heard, madam, that there was any fault in trying on new cloaths; and always supposed an *elegant taste in dress* was a very commendable qualification.

Mrs. FREEMAN.

But there is a wide difference, my dear girl, betwixt making it the *business of our lives*, and attending to it sufficiently to make us *neat and like gentlewomen*. Besides, there is nothing requires more attention to propriety of *time and place than dress*. View yourself, and consider whether you make an appearance that would be to your advantage, supposing any acquaintance should accidentally come in to tea.

Miss FREEMAN.

I could easily explain the cause of it; and I think every person must *admire* my dress, for it is the most charming one I ever saw.

Mrs. ALLWORTHY.

Certain as you seem to be, Miss *Matilda*, of universal admiration, I cannot help thinking, that with your present appearance you would be disappointed. Your gown, though *elegant*, loses its effect,

effect, by the miserable state of your hair, which gives me the idea of porcupine quills, intermixed with feathers ; and the ornaments, though exquisite in their kind, instead of *adorning*, only give you a ridiculous look.

Mrs. FREEMAN.

I think we have said enough to convince *Matilda* that she had better retire, and lay by her cloaths for a properer season.

Miss FREEMAN.

I never intended to keep them on long, but thought you would like to *see* me, as I had dressed myself.

Mrs. ALLWORTHY.

If that was really your motive, my dear, I will gratify your wishes, by telling you that I think your dress very pretty, and do not doubt, when it is put on with propriety, and for a *ball*, it will appear very elegant ; and now let me advise you to take it off, lest you should meet with some accident.

Miss FREEMAN.

I will go directly, madam, I would not spoil it for the world. [*She walks off looking behind her, admiring*

*miring her train—with the corner of her hoop she sweeps down a cup and saucer, and spills the tea all over her : Miss Clara jumps up to assist her.*

MISS CLARA.

O sister, what a sad accident !

MISS FREEMAN [*bursts into tears.*]

Sad indeed ! what shall I do ? Papa will never give me another dress, and I shall not be able to go to the ball. What an unfortunate creature I am !

MRS. FREEMAN.

You are like a great many other people, my dear, commit an error, and then call yourself *unfortunate* ; your accident was entirely occasioned by your preferring your own opinion to the judgment of others. [*Rings the bell.*] Let *Williams* go with you to take off your things ; perhaps with her care, they may escape better than you imagine.

[*Enter Williams.*]

MRS. FREEMAN.

Miss *Freeman* has had an accident with her dress, you must endeavour, *Williams*, to recover it as well as possible,

[*Miss Freeman and Williams go out.*  
Miss

Miss CLARA.

I am very sorry poor *Matilda* has met with such a misfortune. She shall be welcome to my dress if it will fit her.

Mrs. FREEMAN.

My mind is too much engrossed by more material thoughts, to dwell on this circumstance; but I think, with care, her dress will not be much the worse; and if it should, it may serve as a lesson in future, against *false pride* and *vanity*.

Mrs. ALLWORTHY.

Poor *Matilda*; one brought up as she has been, could not meet a greater distress.

Mrs. FREEMAN.

Amidst all her errors, I do not believe she is really ill-natured; different as the life she leads with us is from that she led at her aunt's, she appears to me to submit to it cheerfully; and though she does not *follow* any of the advice that I give her, still she *listens* without *murmuring*.

Mrs. ALLWORTHY.

From whence you may indulge the pleasing hope of soon moulding her to your wishes.

[Enter



[Enter Miss Freeman.]

Mrs. FREEMAN.

Well, my love, how fares your dress?

Miss FREEMAN.

Better than I could have expected, and *Williams* flatters me, that by to-morrow it will be little the worse.

Miss CLARA.

I am glad of that; for indeed, sister, I felt great concern for you.

Mrs. FREEMAN.

Tell me honestly, *Matilda*, do not you wish you had employed yourself usefully this afternoon, instead of throwing your time away in so trifling a manner?

Miss FREEMAN.

To be sure I do, because then I should not have hurt my dress,

Mrs. FREEMAN.

But does it not teach you the necessity of never being *idle*? had you assisted *Clara* in attending to the young one's, you would not have had any time to misemploy.

Miss

Miss FREEMAN.

If I could acquire a relish for employment it would be a comfort to me. What can I do mamma?

Mrs. FREEMAN.

Take pleasure in *reading, writing, working*; and if you have *taste*, apply to the several accomplishments, so admirable in most of your acquaintance,

Miss FREEMAN.

I should never have time to do so much, nor is there I think a necessity for it, at least for *working*, because the servants can be employed about that; and as for *writing*, what use is that of?

Mrs. FREEMAN.

In my opinion, nothing marks a gentlewoman more than excelling in both; *writing*, is indeed, particularly necessary, as even from a note you may judge of the education of the person who executed it.

Mrs. ALLWORTHY.

True; and it is a qualification that excites a great deal of *praise*, which ought to be an inducement for acquiring it. Indeed, I would rather a child of mine could *work* and *write* well, than excel in what are peculiarly termed *accomplishments*; though even  
the

the latter are so essential to a *polite education*, that I should be sorry to see them wanting.

Miss CLARA.

If I could only write and work, what could I do to assist mamma. in case of her being reduced to poverty?

Mrs. ALLWORTHY.

If you had not been better instructed, more could not be expected from you, but we may hope to reap great benefit, where great pains have been bestowed.

Miss FREEMAN.

I have had more masters than my sister without knowing half so much.

Mrs. ALLWORTHY.

You have been unfortunate, my dear, and bred up by an aunt who indulged you without considering the injury she did to your future prospects; with your good sense, I think, all that may be easily overcome.

Miss FREEMAN.

Every thing appears *new* to me, and I am quite bewildered. Mamma seems perfectly good and kind to me, and still I feel under a restraint before her

her which I never experienced with my aunt; what can be the meaning of it?

Mrs. FREEMAN,

Believe me, dear girl, I am anxiously solicitous for your welfare, and for that reason, lament your being educated by your aunt. I need not say, that her sentiments did not accord with mine. The difference of our *birth*, made the difference of *opinion*. Life flowed smoothly with *her*, she had no trials, and possessed an income that insured her respect and adulation. I have experienced a very contrary fortune, and was early initiated in scenes of sorrow. My father being an officer, felt distress himself, and pitied it in many who belonged to our regiment. No tongue can describe the scenes of woe I have witnessed; the more melancholy, because the objects were *good* and *brave*. By these, my heart has been softened, and though by my marriage, I have been in very affluent circumstances, I could never forget the poverty of my former companions.

Miss FREEMAN.

I shall be ashamed to expose my ignorance, or I would begin taking pains about something; but



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Miss FREEMAN.

I shall be ashamed to expose my ignorance, or I would begin taking pains about something; but

the worst is, I am equally unknowing in every thing, and therefore have no hopes of ever regaining lost time.

Mrs ALLWORTHY.

Fear not, Miss *Matilda*, a good resolution and endeavours will assist you beyond imagination.

Mrs. FREEMAN.

It grows late ; I wonder we neither see or hear from Mr. *Freeman* !

Mrs. ALLWORTHY.!

Do not let that alarm you, my dear friend, suspend your apprehensions.

Mrs. FREEMAN.

My dependence and reliance are placed where consolation never fails, and I doubt not a mitigation to my anxiety in proper time.

[Enter a Footman with a letter which he gives to his mistress and goes out,]

Mrs. FREEMAN.

From my husband !

[She reads it with agitation, her daughters watch her countenance attentively.]

Mrs.

Mrs. FREEMAN.

All is lost!

Miss FREEMAN and Miss CLARA.

What is lost? Dear mamma, do not keep us in suspense.

Mrs. ALLWORTHY.

Restrain your emotions a little while, my dears, this shall be soon explained; at present, your mamma is too much agitated to be able to talk to you.

Miss CLARA.

I hope no accident has happened to papa, dear mamma, [*she throws her arms round Mrs. Freeman's neck.*] Lean upon my shoulder and tell me what afflicts you?

Mrs. FREEMAN [*composes herself.*]

I am much recovered; though sadly hurt, that my dear children must partake this affliction with me. Your father's losses in trade are very great. In short, he has not more than enough left to satisfy his creditors. [*She presses each daughter to her heart.*] Let us determine to submit to our fate with becoming fortitude, and mutually unite in endeavouring to

F 2

support



support poor Mr. *Freeman*, who requires every consolation.

*Miss FREEMAN*, [*bursts into a passion of tears.*]

What will become of *me*? what shall I do? we are as badly off as Mrs. *Gates*; and if any body should slight me, it will break my heart.

*Mrs. ALLWORTHY.*

You are very *selfish* in your grief *Matilda*, and think only for *yourself*. Look there, [*pointing to her mamma.*] direct your attention to that object, forget *your sorrows*, and relieve *her's*.

*Miss FREEMAN.*

I do not know what to say to her. I cannot *help crying*; it is *cruel* to expect so much from me.

*Miss CLARA.*

Compose yourself, dearest *mamma*, for all our sakes. I will do every thing I can to be useful.

*Mrs. FREEMAN.*

I do not doubt it, and am quite resigned to our fate. May you, my dear *Clara*, practice, what in theory appeared so easy to you, for now it is become necessary, and may your sister benefit by your example. I must go to my young ones, soon will they be without another attendant.

*Miss*

*Miss CLARA, [sobbing.]*

Do not say so, I will be their nurse, and save you all the trouble in my power.

*Mrs. FREEMAN.*

I neither fear your intentions or doubt your abilities, and will put them to a trial. Stay with your sister, and endeavour to reason her into resignation. *Mrs. Allworthy*, you will accompany me.

*Mrs. ALLWORTHY.*

Most willingly.

*[They go out.]*

*Miss CLARA runs and throws her arms round her sister's neck, and they continue crying sometime, Clara then recollects herself.*

*Miss CLARA.*

How ill am I performing my mamma's injunctions ! she bid me *console* you, and I am, by my own grief, adding to your's.

*Miss FREEMAN.*

What miserable wretches are we all become ! now must I submit, perhaps, to be a servant ; or, what is worse, work for a daily subsistence.

Miss CLARA.

If I am not obliged to be an apprentice, I shall think myself happy. To be separated from mamma, will indeed be a sad stroke.

Miss FREEMAN.

Only think how Mils *Foley* will rejoice in my downfall. I must sit below her and every body else. [*cries again with violence.*]

Miss CLARA.

I should never suffer such thoughts as these to distress me. Now we may discover our real friends.

Miss FREEMAN.

You are quite a *philosopher*, Clara! I am *not*; but still I could wish to be useful to mamma, and merit her kind approbation.

Miss CLARA.

Dear *Matilda*, how I love you for that desire! we shall never be greatly unhappy, if you will but unite your endeavours with mine to lessen mamma's afflictions.

Miss FREEMAN.

I wonder whether I could draw or paint fit to be seen; I have a great inclination to try.

Miss

*Miss CLARA.*

Do. I have not one fear of your success; any instruction in my power to give you may command.

*Miss FREEMAN.*

Thank you, *Clara*; I may perhaps trouble you, though I will if possible to avoid it. It is a shame for the *elder* to stand in need of being taught by the younger.

*Miss CLARA.*

Let us forget that distinction, dear girl! the difference of our ages is small, and I have never been separated from mamma's instruction and example.

*Miss FREEMAN.*

I begin to honor and love my dear mother, as much as you do. Her mildness has convinced my reason: had she exerted any violence, I am certain she would have found me obstinate, though I must confess greatly against my own interest.

*Miss CLARA.*

Parents may sometimes be wrong, yet I never could bear to hear them found fault with by their children, and always avoided the company of those who fell into that error.

*Miss*



Miss FREEMAN.

You are right, I am convinced ; that thought never struck me before, but I did not give myself time to consider much about any thing ; however, I shall become a new being. But do you think, *Clara*, mamma will ever love me as well as she does you ?

Miss CLARA.

I have no room to believe she makes any difference amongst any of us, in respect to her *affection*, though I must suppose your being guided by her better judgment, will procure you a larger portion of her esteem than you at present possess.

Miss FREEMAN.

I have a great inclination to offer her my assistance in undressing the young ones ; perhaps it might please and console her, as she will not like the servants should see her affliction.

Miss CLARA.

Very probably. Let us then unite our efforts. I shall tell mamma the offer was your own thought.

Miss FREEMAN.

No, I beg you will not, there is no merit in it, for surely it is my duty to save her trouble.

Miss

Miss CLARA.

But it is certainly commendable to do our duty, besides, it will be the subject of great joy to mamma, that you already profit by her advice.

Miss FREEMAN.

Come then, let us begin the sweet labours of duty and love. I think I feel more affection for the little dears, than ever I did.

Miss CLARA.

Attending them is an endearing employment, and I think a very necessary one; for it teaches us to know our obligations to my mother, by observing the trouble she once had with us.

Miss FREEMAN.

I am inspired with spirit and resolution, and, perhaps, by to-morrow morning, may surprise you with my *capabilities*.

Miss CLARA.

I shall be prepared for something great, and rejoice at your exertions; but we seem to prate and forget our good intentions.

Miss

*Miss FREEMAN.*

Come then. No time should be lost when a good action is in view.

*[They go out.]*

**END of ACT II.**

**A C T.**

## A C T III.

SCENE, *A Parlour. The breakfast things.*

[*A Servant shows in Mrs. Allworthy, then goes out.*]

Mrs. ALLWORTHY.

I HOPE to find this distressed family more composed; and that a good night's rest has calmed their spirits. Poor creatures, what a struggle appeared in their exertions last night to support each other. Their virtuous resolution deserves, and will, I doubt not, be rewarded. How much more does such a conduct excite our pity and admiration, than weak unavailing complaints and despondency, which render people unfit to assist themselves, or to be assisted by others.

*Miss*



[*Miss Clara peeps into the room, then enters.*]

*Miss CLARA.*

Dear Mrs. *Allworthy*, I wished to find you alone, and am happily come in time to meet you so.

*Mrs. ALLWORTHY.*

What has my dear girl to say? I should suppose something of great consequence by that anxious countenance.

*Miss CLARA.*

I have indeed something of the first consequence to mention, which has kept me from sleeping all night. It is about my new cloaths; you know I can never *wear* them *now*, and it will be a sad pity for papa to pay for them when he is in such distress, and besides they will be useless. I wish, my dear second mother, you would endeavour to dispose of them among the numerous young ladies with whom you are acquainted.

*Mrs. ALLWORTHY.*

It is time enough to think upon that subject, my dear, you had better not be hasty.

*Miss CLARA.*

My mind is so bent upon removing this load from them, that I can think of nothing else;

do, dearest madam, promise to assist me on this occasion.

Mrs. ALLWORTHY.

Depend on it, my love, every thing in my power you may command.

Miss CLARA.

I knew you would not disappoint my wishes. But I have now another favor to obtain, which you must grant.

Mrs. ALLWORTHY.

You know me well enough, *Clara*, to be certain, that I can deny you no *reasonable* request.

Miss CLARA.

Listen to me then with patience. I think it my duty to assist my papa and mamma as far as my power goes—will not you agree with me in that?

Mrs. ALLWORTHY.

Certainly. But to what does all this tend?

Miss CLARA.

To a very *good* point, as you shall hear. My cap, there is no doubt of the milliner's readily taking again, and so I dispose of my *ornaments*, which are the last I shall ever have. But my

harpſichord and muſic will ſurely afford a ſmall ſum of money, which would in an emergency be very acceptable; the motive of my ſelling them, without the knowledge of my parents, is for fear their tendereſs for me ſhould oppoſe it. What uſe can muſic be of to me, who muſt work for my bread? It would be ridiculous you know, Mrs. *Allworthy*, in ſuch a ſituation, to diſplay any *faſhionable accompliſhments*.

Mrs. ALLWORTHY.

I am delighted with the dutiful attention you pay to the preſent unhappineſs of your worthy father and mother, whoſe diſtreſs would be more ſupportable but for the conſideration of their children. I eſteem you for thinking ſo deeply, and hope the ſame ſolicitude will influence every future action of your life, which relates to them; but I cannot agree with you, that it is right to take any ſteps, though for the relief of your parents, without their knowledge and concurrence.

Miss CLARA.

Believe me, madam, I would not, on any *common occaſion*, preſume to act without their conſent; but  
this

this is so *peculiar a circumstance*. It is selling what can no longer be of *use*, and is, besides, *my own*, for my uncle gave me the instrument when I was a very little girl.

Mrs. ALLWORTHY.

Still, my dear girl, I must support my own opinion. Indeed, you are in an error to indulge such a wish, though to benefit your nearest and dearest relations.

Miss CLARA.

I never was disposed to rebel before ; but now, if I was older, should like to oppose my opinion to your's, and abide by my own.

Mrs. ALLWORTHY. —

At any age, I fear such conduct would draw its own punishment upon you. Why should I oppose your intentions, but from motives of kindness?

Miss CLARA.

I know it, dearest madam, and yet to give up a plan I have been all night bringing, as I thought, to perfection, and all to procure unexpected relief to my beloved parents ?



Mrs. ALLWORTHY.

The thought, the design, is worthy of a feeling generous heart, with such endearing sentiments as these you will bestow peace on many, and ensure it for yourself. But let me entreat you never to indulge the wish of doing any thing in *secret*. Think with what perspicuity your amiable mother judges. As soon as your papa's affairs are arranged, she will instantly settle the proper regulations for all her family, and dispose of what will not be for your benefit to preserve. Let us however, my love, [*takes her hand,*] drop this subject for the present. You will coincide with my opinion by-and-by, and thank me for being, what now appears *peremptory*—tell me how your mamma does, and whether she obtained any rest last night?

Miss CLARA.

I have great pleasure in telling you she is wonderfully well and composed, but desired to have her breakfast sent up, as she is busy in regulating some bills and books which she cannot leave.

Mrs. ALLWORTHY.

It is time then to send her some refreshment; come, my dear, make the tea, I am rather in want of some myself, as I have been up these four hours.

Miss CLARA.

I beg your pardon very sincerely, but my mind has been so entirely engrossed with my schemes, I never thought of eating. [*She seats herself at the table, but looks dispirited and disappointed.*]

Mrs. ALLWORTHY.

Is your sister with her mamma?

Miss CLARA.

No, madam, she got up very early, and shut herself into *our* dressing room; whatever her employment is, it must be of great consequence, for she has been there, undisturbed, ever since six o'clock. We will send for her. [*As she gets up to ring the bell,*

[*Enter Miss Freeman, with a drawing for a fan-mount in her hand.*]

Mrs. ALLWORTHY.

Good morning to you, my dear, what study has kept you so long alone?

*Miss FREEMAN.*

I hope one, that will in time prove of some consequence to me. See the first fruits of my labour ! [*laying the drawing on the table.*] I would not break my fast till I finished the task I set myself, of endeavouring to copy the fan-mount *Clara* shewed me yesterday. I must beg her to instruct me how to paint it. I think, with pains, I may do better than I apprehended I should be able to do.

*Miss CLARA.*

How well you have imitated my outlines. O! sister, what an acquisition has inclination and application already gained you.

*Mrs. ALLWORTHY.*

Dear girl ! how this early instance of real attention, both to yourself and friends, endears you to me; continue but your endeavours, and success will attend you. At sight of this, your parents will lose the recollection of their *loss* in your *gain*, of such moment to your future well doing.

*Miss FREEMAN.*

I am very solicitous to obtain my mamma's love, for it is irksome to live unregarded by any one.

*Miss*

*Miss CLARA.*

That was not your case surely *Matilda*; my dear mother might sometimes appear serious, but I believe she really regarded you as affectionately as she could.

*Miss FREEMAN.*

My consciousness of not deserving it may make me suspicious. However, I think, if I can but model myself to my papa's wishes and her's, I shall be as much beloved as any one.

*Miss CLARA.*

I will carry up mamma's tea, and wait on her myself, it may be pleasanter than sending a servant.

[*She goes out.*]

*Mrs. ALLWORTHY.*

How much the change I already perceive is wrought in your disposition delights me! may you, my beloved girl, continue to feel the real advantage of employment, and make use of your time, which, once lost, can never be regained.

*Miss FREEMAN.*

I hope my mind will be as steady as my present intentions are ardent; I shall endeavour to be good, and I cannot do more.

*Mrs.*



Mrs. ALLWORTHY.

True ; but you have not yet proved the efficacy of endeavours, they will will establish good habits in time ; which once acquired, will, I hope, remain permanent, for life.

Miss FREEMAN.

I have been all night thinking what is to become of me, and making resolutions. Yet, surely, I am very much to be pitied, who have been bred up with the expectation of a great fortune, and now when I could enjoy it am disappointed.

Mrs. ALLWORTHY.

Every species of distress is the subject of commiseration to the humane. Yet, how many hundreds now sink under afflictions heavier than yours, without one alleviating circumstance, but what arises from a dependence on Providence ?

Miss FREEMAN.

I do not think any distress can exceed *mine*.

Mrs. ALLWORTHY.

And why your's in particular ?—you certainly share distress with your family, but your misfortune is not greater than theirs.

Miss

*Miss FREEMAN.*

Surely, madam, my aunt's bringing me up to the expectation of a great fortune, without hinting at the possibility of a reverse, adds much to my present disappointment.

*Mrs. ALLWORTHY.*

True, my dear, you have laboured under many disadvantages. False *pride*, which has been the bane of many, was early instilled into your young mind, and will require reason and religion to overcome it. The cure is already begun, by your opening your ears to the admonitions of your friends, by which you discern how wrong it will be, to retain opinions calculated only to misguide you.

*Miss FREEMAN.*

I sincerely wish to be as amiable as my sister, did I but know how to become so!

*Mrs. ALLWORTHY.*

By copying all that is praiseworthy in her. Let us now go and pay our respects to your mamma.

*Miss FREEMAN.*

I will attend you with pleasure, madam.

*[They go out.]*

SCENE,

SCENE, *changes to another Parlour.*

[*Enter the two Miss Foleys.*]

Miss FOLEY.

How I will mortify that proud insolent girl, and make her *feel* that I am now *her superior*.

Miss HARRIOT.

You could not surely come hither with so cruel a design? I would not have accompanied you had I suspected it.

Miss FOLEY.

And therefore I kept my thoughts to myself. What, do you think I will not retort on the proud minx when I have the opportunity?

Miss HARRIOT.

I hear them on the stairs, and dread the meeting.

[*Enter the Miss Freemans*]

Miss FOLEY, [*just rises from her chair, and sinks into it immediately.*]

Your servant.

Miss HARRIOT.

How do you do, ladies? I hope we see you well?

Miss

*Miss CLARA.*

Very well, I thank you, pray sit down.

*[They all seat themselves.]*

*Miss FOLEY.*

Bless me! what is the matter with *Miss Freeman*? why, you are as mute as a fish.

*Miss CLARA.*

My sister is the same as usual, I believe, but we cannot command our spirits at all times.

*Miss FOLEY.*

And cannot she answer for *herself*? There *was* a time when *Matilda* did not need the aid of her meek sister.

*Miss FREEMAN.*

I am obliged to *Clara* for speaking, and think it hard you should reprove her for it.

*Miss FOLEY.*

O! by no mean. I reprove her, for what? she is very welcome to speak. I can think of nothing but the ball to-night, and the dress I shall appear in. We shall meet you of course

*[Miss Freeman burst into tears.]*

*Miss*



*Miss FOLEY.*

What can make you cry, *Miss Freeman*? you, who are to eclipse all the young ladies by your superior finery?

*Miss CLARA.*

We shall not on this occasion outvie any one, for we are not to be there.

*Miss HARRIOT.*

I am extremely concerned for that.

*Miss FOLEY.*

Not there? you must mistake! child, for I know you have new dresses for the purpose. Send *them*, however, that something belonging to you may be taken notice of.

*Miss FREEMAN.*

I see, *Miss Foley*, you are cruel enough to rejoice in our distress, therefore I will complete your triumph, by informing you, that in all probability, we shall never go to any balls as long as we live.

[*Continues crying.*]

*Miss FOLEY.*

Pray, then, what are you to go to?

*Miss CLARA*, [*greatly agitated.*]

To service, perhaps.

Miss FOLEY.

To service! then you must change your *names*. I should insist upon that, if you offered yourselves to me.

Miss HARRIOT, [*with great concern.*]

Dear girls, how my heart bleeds for you; I had heard something of your papa's losses, but hoped to find it only report.

Miss CLARA.

It is too true; but we are all resigned to our fate; indeed, with such an example as mamma's before us, it would be shameful if we were not.

Miss HARRIOT.

You have not yet, my dear *Clara*, experienced the sad reverse, and I hope, never will, at least, not to the degree of servitude.

Miss FOLEY.

What signifies the degree. They will easily get places. I will speak to Lady Grogram. She told me, *decayed gentlewomen* were the pleasantest of all domestics; they were so *patient*, and bore reproof better than any others.

Miss HARRIOT.

Fie! sister, it is cruel to add to their distress?

Miss FOLEY.

Add to it? why they should be innured to what they must meet with; respect never follows the indigent-

Miss FREEMAN, [*with some spirit.*]

We need not make ourselves quite so despicable, as to live with a modern fine lady; that would be to give up all pretensions to respect at once.

Miss FOLEY.

You must give up your *spirit*, madam, or you will soon be turned out of doors go where you will, and then to whom will you apply for relief?

Miss FREEMAN.

Not to you, Miss *Foley*. I shall trouble you on no occasion, believe me.

Miss FOLEY.

I am glad to hear it; for I hate dependent acquaintance.

Miss CLARA.

We shall, I trust, have no occasion to seek to any; for we do not despair of being sought by the worthy and the good.

Miss

*Miss* FOLEY.

O, are these your hopes? Then probably you do not despair of being *rich* again, and seating your above *us*?

*Miss* FREEMAN.

I blush to think I was ever capable of acting so meanly, and sincerely ask *Miss Harriot*'s pardon for my behaviour the last time we met. *Clara* convinced me yesterday of the impropriety of my conduct towards you; and to-day my own feelings strengthen and confirm her argument. [*Looks steadily at Miss Foley.*]

*Miss* FOLEY.

You are very *impertinent* in your manner, *Matilda*; but people who mix with their *inferiors*, must expect to meet impertinence. Come *Harriot*, let us go; or do you intend to stay *crying* over these girls all day?

*Miss* HARRIOT.

If they will permit me to assist in comforting them, I shall be obliged by it. Accept my company, dear girls, I beseech you.

*Miss* CLARA.

Your offer is a very kind one, my dear *Miss Harriot*; but we cannot think of interfering with the ball; to-morrow, if you will favor us, we shall be glad of your company.

*Miss*



Miss FOLEY.

It is a vain wish. Mamma will never suffer my sister to keep *low* company.

Miss FREEMAN.

I thank you, Miss *Foley*, for opening my eyes. Just as *you* argue now, did I yesterday about poor Mrs. *Gates*; and treated her very *insolently*; now I heartily repent having done so, Take warning, therefore, by my errors and misfortune; the latter may be your's, but it will lose half its *bitterness* if unaccompanied by the former.

Miss FOLEY, [*disdainfully*.]

It is not for such people as *you* to give *advice*.— Do you part with your instrument? what a foolish question; that you do of course.

Miss CLARA.

Certainly; I shall never think of attending to music, unless it should be necessary to recommend me in whatever station papa fixes on for me. Mrs. *Allworthy* thinks I am qualified as a teacher to a school.

Miss FOLEY.

A *blessed* life you will pass; and *Matilda's* delicate hands to trundle a mop.

Miss

Miss HARRIOT.

For shame ! sister.

Miss CLARA.

If she is sunk below your *pity*, let her also be below your contempt.

Miss FREEMAN.

I am sunk in fortune, it is true, but I must be abject indeed to wish to obtain any thing from Miss *Foley*, but her *absence*, or her *silence*.

Miss FOLEY.

Am I ordered out of this house by you ? impertinence ! for this behaviour, I will never speak one word in your favor.

Miss FREEMAN.

You have treated me, Miss *Foley*, as I deserve, and have done me an essential piece of service ; but tell me, could you, even by a look, indicate an unkind thought to my patient amiable mother ?

Miss FOLEY.

I should look at *her* the same as I do at *other* people, perhaps less embarrassed now she is beneath me ; for some how I used rather to stand in awe of her.

Miss CLARA.

You make me angry, Miss *Foley*, by saying, my dearest mother is *beneath* you. But I recollect myself; she would only *smile* at such a *remark*, and I am proud to follow her example.

[Enter Mrs. Allworthy.]

Miss FREEMAN.

You look remarkably cheerful; dear madam, what occasions it?

Mrs. ALLWORTHY.

The sight of your papa. He is returned home, and appears uncommonly well.

Miss CLARA.

I rejoice to hear it, may I go and see him?

Mrs. ALLWORTHY.

Not immediately, he has people on business with him. Your mamma is coming presently.

Miss FREEMAN.

As my papa is in health and spirits, he will be more capable of directing us in future, and comforting mamma.

Mrs. ALLWORTHY.

She does not appear at present to want *comfort*, for she possesses every thing she can wish for in this world.

Miss

*Miss FOLEY.*

But *fortune*; and I fancy every body finds *that* a very necessary ingredient to happiness.

*Mrs. ALLWORTHY.*

How can *Mrs. Freeman* want fortune? it is well known that *Mr. Freeman* is one of the richest merchants in the city.

*Miss FREEMAN.*

O, madam! you need not conceal from *Miss Foley* our misfortunes, she knows them, not only from us, but from report.

*Mrs. ALLWORTHY.*

Then I must have the pleasure of telling her, report is not always to be depended upon. For *Mr. Freeman's* ships are safely arrived in the river; and he has heard, that another, which he thought taken by the enemy, has only been detained by contrary winds, in a neutral port these two months, and is hourly expected.

*Miss CLARA.*

No wonder you looked so pleased, madam, for your goodness leads you to rejoice with every body that is fortunate.

*Miss*



Miss HARRIOT.

I do sincerely congratulate you on this happy event, and am rejoiced to hear it.

Miss FOLEY, [*looks very much confused.*]

I wish you joy. Who could have thought it! Come, sister, we had better go.

Miss HARRIOT.

I am ready to attend you, with a lighter heart than I brought hither.

Miss FOLEY, [*confused.*]

I suppose these ladies will go to the ball now. Shall we have the honor of going with you? we can call on you in our coach if agreeable.

Miss CLARA.

You are very obliging; but we cannot think of the ball, till we have seen papa and mamma, and know if it is agreeable to them for us to go.

Miss FREEMAN.

As Miss Foley has made the offer of taking us, we can let her know as soon as this matter is determined for us.

Miss HARRIOT.

Do then; we shall be happy to join your party. Good morning to you. [*They curtesy and go out.*]

Mrs. ALLWORTHY.

Let me now press my dear girls to my heart, and congratulate them on returning prosperity.

Miss FREEMAN.

You should rejoice also in *my adversity* ; for it has done me more good than riches possibly could have done. I was inclined to give up false pride by my mamma's arguments and your's ; but Miss *Foley's* conduct this morning has, I hope, extinguished every latent spark of it ; she shewed me my *own picture* ; I pity her error, though I despise in her those faults which made my own character contemptible,

Miss CLARA.

Indeed, sister, you have shewn more forbearance than I could have practised. Miss *Foley* has been more unfeelingly insolent than I thought any person capable of being.

Miss FREEMAN.

You forget my conduct yesterday to poor Mrs. *Gates* ; it was quite as inexcusable.

Miss CLARA.

But, *Matilda*, how could you promise to go to the ball with *them*, in case we should be permitted to go ? you cannot think of it.

Miss

Miss FREEMAN.

Why not? it is my intention to accept her invitation to night, and at all proper times; not only to shew to her, that I am *above* resenting her treatment, but also, that the sight of her may remind me of my own faults, and with a secret hope, that the change in my conduct, may effect an alteration in her's.

Mrs. ALLWORTHY.

You judge nobly, my dear girl. Continue to think thus, and *false pride*, the *bane of peace*, will not endanger the loss of your future repose. Well, *Clara*, will you listen to my admonitions in future? was not my advice better to follow than your own?

Miss CLARA.

O dear, madam, I blush at the recollection of my earnestness, and beg your pardon for it.

Miss FREEMAN.

What did you do then, *Clara*? I long to know.

Mrs. ALLWORTHY.

We will talk of it another time; though it is nothing but what must redound to her credit, and prove her duty and attention to her parents.

[Enter

[Enter Maid.]

MAID.

My lady sent me to beg one of the young ladies would come to the hair dresser, who has been waiting some time.

Miss FREEMAN.

Then we are to go to the ball; will you go first, sister?

Miss CLARA.

If it is most agreeable to you?

[She goes out.]

MAID.

My mistress has been enquiring about a box of fine things belonging to you Miss, and is afraid somebody has stolen it.

Miss FREEMAN, [*blushes, in confusion.*]

I have it; run and tell mamma. [*in confusion*  
Maid goes out.] I am sorry now I took them; but, it was to get you to sell them, and carry the money to her. I had nothing else to give; could I then refuse to part with what was of no use to me?

Mrs. ALLWORTHY.

But it was wrong to take them clandestinely, and might have been productive of great uneasiness to  
your



your mamma. I must read both your sister and you a lecture on this subject ; for her offence was of a similar nature.

[Enter MAID.]

My master is gone into my mistress's dressing room, and desires to see you there, ladies.

[She goes out.]

Miss FREEMAN [cries.]

What can be the matter with me ; I was never happier in my life, and yet I cannot restrain my tears.

Mrs. ALLWORTHY.

Sensibility frequently produces this effect, that is now your case. But go, my love, to your papa, and receive in his caresses the reward you merit.

[She goes out.]

Mrs. ALLWORTHY.

The goodness of Providence has removed the affliction of this worthy family, and conviction has subdued *Matilda's* arrogant pride ; her behaviour to Miss *Foley* (which I overheard by being in the next room) will, I hope, bring about *her* reformation

mation also, and confirm the TRIUMPH OF  
REASON. I will now join this joyful family, and  
assist in decorating the dear girls for the ball.

[*She goes out.*]

THE END.



THE  
CONTRAST,  
A DRAMA,  
IN THREE ACTS.



## PERSONS of the DRAMA.

Mrs. VERNON.

Mrs. G. VERNON.

Mrs. SELWYN.

Miss SELWYN, aged 14.

Miss VERNON, 16.

Master VERNON, 13.

Miss WARD, 15.

Miss FRANKLIN, 14.

Miss THUROT, 13.

SALLY, and other Attendants.

A.  
THE  
C O N T R A S T,  
A DRAMA, IN THREE ACTS.

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A C T I.

SCENE, I.

[*Mrs. Vernon at breakfast, attended by her Maid.*]

[*Enter Miss Selwyn, who advances to the table and takes her grandmamma's hand.*]

Miss SELWYN.

GOOD morning to you, my dear grandmamma.

I hope you rested well last night, and feel no remains of the rheumatic pains you complained of?

Mrs. VERNON.

Thank you, my dear girl, I am as well as I can expect to be at my late time of life, though I have still the same pains flying about me.

Miss SELWYN, [*who sits down.*]

I am extremely sorry for it. Is your breakfast as you like it? your toast does not look so nice as usual; you do not seem to relish it. *Sally*, you had better, if you please, make another.

Mrs. VERNON.

Your solicitude is very grateful to my feelings; but, indeed, my maid has done every thing as usual. It is not wonderful that the appetite of an old woman near eighty should fail her, who is too infirm to take the benefit of fresh air and exercise.

Miss SELWYN.

What would I give that I could by any means remove some of your infirmities? then my dear grandmamma might enjoy herself abroad as I do.

Mrs. VERNON.

Undoubtedly. Health is certainly one of the greatest blessings we can possess; but unfortunately, we seldom

feldom know how to prize it, till lost by our own mismanagement. The *youthful* too generally imagine they shall never be *old*; and therefore throw away the most precious part of their lives in folly and dissipation, which occasions constant regret for mispent time, and embitters all their latter years. My comfort is, that I feel only the natural infirmities of age; my conscience does not reproach me on this head.

*Miss SELWYN.*

Young people who have a grandmamma and mamma like mine, *can* surely never be subject to such errors?

*Mrs. VERNON.*

We are to hope they have not such advantages as you have, my dear. *Sally*, take away, and give me my knotting bag.

*Miss SELWYN.*

You are never idle, madam. With your permission, I will fetch my embroidery, and keep you company.

*Mrs. VERNON.*

Do so, my love. [*Miss Selwyn goes out.*] Rub this table a little more, *Sally*.

SALLY.



SALLY.

How very pretty Miss grows, Madam!—she will be a perfect beauty in time.

Mrs. VERNON.

She has a good heart, and a sweet disposition; those are durable perfections. Let me hear no flattery, Sally.

[Sally goes out.

[Enter Miss Selwyn with her frame, which she places properly and begins to work.]

Miss SELWYN.

I have often wondered, my dear grandmamma, to think how it is possible for you to be so cheerful who are always in pain, and neither can visit or be much visited.

Mrs. VERNON.

Many circumstances conduce to my cheerfulness. My Creator, as one of his bountiful gifts, has endowed me with an active mind, in consequence of which, I have acquired a habit of constant employment. But above all, the reliance which a long life has taught me to place on my Maker, naturally produces serenity of mind; and I look back with  
satisfaction

satisfaction on the days that are past, as I trust, guided by his unerring hand, I have not spent them *unprofitably*. I am sure I have not *unthankfully*. The blessings I enjoy are manifold. Misfortunes I have shared with the rest of mankind. Grateful and resigned, I wait for the moment of my dissolution.

*Miss SELWYN.*

I hope, however, that your life will be spared many years longer ; for I have a greatdeal to learn ; and though my mamma is all goodness, yet she has not so much time for conversation as you have ; besides, it would break my heart to be separated from you.

*Mrs. VERNON, [smiling.]*

The heart, my dear, is not so easily *broken* as you imagine ; great and heavy have been my afflictions. My mind was naturally weak, and apt to repine at every disappointment, this my parents early observed, their kind attention to me strengthened it ; they soon convinced me, that a dependance on this world is vain, and taught me to draw consolation from that source which never fails. At what time may we expect the travellers ? are you not impatient to see your cousin ?

*Miss*

Miss SELWYN.

Indeed I am. Mamma told me at parting that she hoped to be at home by dinner to-day, and I ordered it accordingly. I am afraid my appearance will be very aukward in the company of *Cecilia*. Seven years residence in France, has no doubt, made her all accomplished.

Mrs. VERNON.

I hope it has improved her, or it will be seven years thrown away: but why should *you* be *aukward*, because *she* is *accomplished*? you have had the advantage of a good education, and under the eye of an amiable mother, whose acquirements and constant attention must have given you a benefit your cousin wanted, separated as she has been for such a length of time from all her relations.

Miss SELWYN.

My aunt holds me so cheap for having been educated in England, though she forbears to speak her sentiments, I think her *looks* seem to say, when my mamma kindly commends my behaviour, "*my daughter will soon convince you whose judgment is the best.*"

Mrs.

Mrs. VERNON.

You should avoid all suspicions of this kind ; for it is ungenerous to judge of what passes in the *minds of others* merely from their *looks* ; had your mamma thought as you do, I dare say she would have been equally hurt, but would have forborn to express her chagrin to any one.

Miss SELWYN.

I saw yesterday morning tears start into her eyes, at a remark my aunt made on *home education*, but it is true, that instead of taking it up, she only turned and embraced me with the greatest affection, and seemed, whilst she pressed me to her bosom, to say, "*I am satisfied with you.*" My aunt was too full of her approaching meeting with *Cecilia*, to say even adieu to me.

Mrs. VERNON.

The neglect was pardonable. I must not have you think of it. Your mamma's conduct through life will be an excellent guide for you. Be thankful to God that you have before your eyes such an example. She has sacrificed her own feelings on many occasions ; and when I lost my son, consented, for my sake, to take your aunt and cousins into this house.



house. You are old enough to remark, that they are in some respects different from her, both in sentiment and character: yet to this she has submitted, and without once deviating from the respect which she thinks due to the relief of so near a relation.

*Miss SELWYN.*

I am sure, my cousin *George* often treats my mamma shamefully, and yet my aunt seldom reproves him for it.

*Mrs. VERNON.*

It is with great concern I see his mother's blind indulgence towards him; but as he has a *good understanding*, I hope he will in time learn to behave with propriety.

[*Enter Master Vernon hastily, he runs to Miss Selwyn, then speaks.*]

I have broke my kite, cousin; do give me some paper to mend it with?

*Miss SELWYN.*

I will give you some paper, *George*, with as much pleasure, as seeing you pay duty and respect to your grandmamma would give me.

*Master*

*Master* VERNON.

I do not mean to be rude to grandmamma, and will kiss her, if she pleases; for, indeed, she is never cross to me; but I heard Miss *Ward* complain the other day, how ill-natured her grandmother was; and she said, she did not know what use old women were of, if they must *live*, but to sit in the chimney corner and knit stockings.

*Mrs.* VERNON.

If you have adopted this sentiment, *George*, my affection can be of little estimation in your opinion; yet I feel myself your parent, and am truly anxious for your welfare.

*Miss* SELWYN.

I think Miss *Ward* was quite inexcusable to use such expressions; for if she has no sense of duty, or propriety herself, she should not have endeavoured to pervert the minds of others.

*Mrs.* VERNON.

Very true, my love; but young people who are in habits of insolence, seldom consider to whom they address it, or think of the prevalence of example.

[*Miss Selwyn furnishes the young gentleman with paper, then speaks.*]

MISS SELWYN.

There, cousin, you may now repair the damage your kite has received; and I hope you will allow, that if *old* women are *useless*, *young* one's are not so?

MASTER VERNON.

Why, I hope you do not call yourself a woman? however, I thank you for your kindness. As soon as I have mended my kite and dried it, I will go and try if it will fly.

[*He goes out.*]

MRS. VERNON.

I think I heard a carriage stop; if so, our *hopes* or *fears*, will soon become *certainty*.

[*Enter Mrs. Selwyn.*]

MRS. SELWYN.

How is my dear mother? I have had ten thousand alarms for your health during my absence.

MRS. VERNON.

Your daughter has paid such attention to me, that I have hardly felt your loss; which will, I hope, induce you not to confine yourself so much as formerly.

merly. Have you brought home your sister and the young *French-woman*?

Mrs. SELWYN.

I have, madam; they only wait your permission to be admitted.—My beloved *Teresa*, you are dearer to me than ever, for shewing such sweet attention to your grandmother.

Miss SELWYN.

I am happy to obtain your approbation so easily, mamma; for in so doing, I have only followed the bent of my own inclinations.

Mrs. VERNON.

Postpone at present these joyful effusions.—It will be proper for *Teresa* to welcome her aunt and Cousin; in the mean time, I will, with your assistance, daughter, prepare myself for the approaching interview.

Mrs. SELWYN.

Go then, my love, into the parlour, and tell my sister, her mother will attend her immediately.

[Exit Miss Selwyn.]

Mrs. VERNON.

I am all anxiety and apprehension, whilst I enquire whether my son's daughter is *worthy* of him?



Mrs. SELWYN.

*Cecilia* is certainly not such a character as will please you. Her education may make a figure among the gay and thoughtless, but is no more suited to the pleasures of a fire side, than such pleasures are suited to her.

Mrs. VERNON.

My fears were then prophetic when I warned her infatuated mother against sending her to a convent. But what is to be expected when a child is removed so many years from the watchful eyes of anxious affection? will you assist me to make the usual alteration in my dress, that I may avoid coming up stairs any more to-day; and then, with a palpitating heart, will I embrace this dear perverted child.

[*They go out.*]

SCENE, *changes to a Parlour.*

[*Mrs. G. Vernon and her daughter.*]

Mrs. G. VERNON.

It is strange no one comes to welcome us.

Miss VERNON.

Not at all; I dare say my aunt is *decorating* and *documenting Teresa*, that she may not appear *awkward* before

before me, [*with a toss of her head,*] she may try, but I do not fancy she will succeed very well.

Mrs. G. VERNON.

You are much mistaken, my dear. Your cousin is a very amiable and accomplished girl, nor does she ever want *decorating* for her dress is always *neat*, and such as she may be seen in before any one.

Miss VERNON.

Well, I allow she may be *neat*, but she cannot know how to put her cloaths on as *fashionably* as I do, for I have been dressed like a *woman* ever since I went to *France*.

[*Enter Miss Selwyn who goes to embrace her cousin with great affection.*]

Welcome to *England*, my dear *Cecilia*; I cannot express the joy I feel that I once more see you in this house. Pardon me, aunt, for taking notice of my cousin, before I have paid my duty to you; but my joy at seeing her occasioned it.

Mrs. G. VERNON [*embraces her.*]

You are forgiven, my love, for a very natural and pleasing omission; I am glad you retain the affection which, even in infancy, you felt for my

*Cecilia.* [To her daughter, who stands gazing at Miss Selwyn in an affected manner] your neither speak or return your cousin's kind reception—recollect yourself, my dear.

*Miss VERNON.*

My cousin is so grown and altered, that I should not have known her any where; but I am very happy to see her again. [*She salutes her.*]

*Mrs. G. VERNON.*

Your separation, consider, has been long enough to make an equal change in *both* of you. How is my mother, *Teresa*? perhaps she may like to see *me alone* first. I will, therefore, find *George*, and then attend her in her own apartment. My absence will accelerate your intimacy, I hope, for at present, you young Ladies, seem very distant to each other.

[*She goes out.*]

*Miss VERNON.*

Indeed I do not mean to appear *cool*; but I have been so lost in *admiration* of you, cousin, that it tied my tongue.

*Miss*

Miss SELWYN.

You are very kind, my dear *Cecilia*; but I cannot be *wain* enough to *believe* what your *politeness* leads you to *say*.

Miss VERNON.

Doubt my *veracity*, child? "*true as the needle to the pole*." But come, tell me ten thousand things at once; I long to know how you amuse yourself?

Miss SELWYN.

I can sooner tell you how I *employ* myself; for as to *amusements*, except joining your brother *George*, in his plays sometimes, I have very few; I am, however, seldom unemployed: but now *you* are returned I may promise myself many pleasures suitable to my time of life, which the want of a companion has for some time deprived me of.

Miss VERNON.

La, coz! you talk as if we were to *play* like *children* still; I like nothing in the *old style*; besides, I have too much vivacity to continue *the same* *employment* long, fa, la, la. [*sings, and dances before the looking-glass.*]

Miss



Miss SELWYN.

You have charming spirits, and will find me ready to join you in both singing and dancing, for I am very fond of them both.

Miss VERNON.

O, I adore them! am in *extasies* at an Opera, and *expire* at the sight of *Vestris*.

Miss SELWYN.

'Tis pity then you should run the risk of hearing and seeing them. I think it would give me much pleasure to go to such an entertainment; but as to *expiring*, I am sure I would not venture to go, could I expect the pleasure would be so exquisite as to produce such an effect upon me.

Miss VERNON.

You are all *nonchalance*. While I am endowed with *Esprit*. *Esprit!* that makes me the life of company,—but am *toujours ennuyé*, when alone. Have you no wish to go to that *dear place* I have just quitted?

Miss SELWYN

If you mean *France*, I confess, my desire is strong to go thither: and I have my mamma's promise to take me, when my dear grandmamma no longer requires our attendance on her.

Miss

Miss VERNON.

Does the old lady give as much *good advice* as she used to do? *positively*, if she *begins* with me I shall advise her, knowing her great fondness for experiments, to send for Monsieur *Blanchard*, and mount in one of his air balloons, and then I will *bribe* him, never to let her come back again.

Miss SELWYN.

Fie! *Cecilia*, It is shocking to hear you talk so of any old woman, but of such a grandmother, unpardonable.

Miss VERNON.

You must expect *this*, and a great deal more ; for I always speak what comes *uppermost*. It is à *la mode de France*.

Miss SELWYN.

*La mode de France* is not a very *pleasant* mode, if it inculcates a want of feeling and respect to our nearest and dearest relations. You have not enquired after your brother ; yet he was a sweet little fellow when you parted from him,

Miss

Miss VERNON.

I have quite forgot what he *was*. But I know it would be better for *me* if I had *no* brother ; for then I should have a larger fortune.

Miss SELWYN.

How can you talk so? what with your brother dead!

Miss VERNON.

It is no proof because I wish myself to have a better fortune that I desire my brother's death. Suppose he was *your* brother, would not that do as well?

Miss SELWYN,

Well! I have no idea of indulging a wish for any thing to *be* different from what Providence has ordered it. I have often, to be sure, wished I had a sister; but then the thought has been forgotten as soon as I obtained a companion.

Miss VERNON.

But consider with what *old fashioned* notions you have been *educated*; never to *think* or *speak* but by *rule*, whilst *Frolic* has been my *Mother*, *Whim* my *Sister*, and their dear attendant *Nonsense*, constantly hovering

hovering about me. Your masters are fussy old *Englishmen*, chosen by your *grandmamma*, because they are *mighty civil well behaved men*. If you perform *well*, they are too *phlegmatic* to *praise* you; if *ill*, the *boors* never forget it. My instructors were *Petit Maitres*, dressed *au dernier goût*, with a *chapeau de bras*. Whilst I was *playing*, or *dancing*, they were all *extasies*; *charmante! adorable! très bien! bon! encore!* were repeated till I was even almost tired of hearing my own praises. *Vive la bagatelle*, shall be my *motto*, whilst *youth*, (a Frenchman would say,) and *beauty* remain.

Miss SELWYN.

I am sure, my dear parents have always encouraged my *liveliness*, and at times I have very great spirits; it is true, they wished me to distinguish between *real cheerfulness* and *levity*. The latter of which, I own, is already so disagreeable in my eyes, that I am sorry to see any young lady encourage it.

Miss VERNON.

That is as much as to say, you do not like *me*.  
*N'importe*. The opinion of a girl bred in *obscurity*,  
 will



will never distress me. But your behaviour need not have been quite so *English* at our first meeting.

Miss SELWYN.

I am sorry, cousin, you found any thing in my speech to apply to *yourself*. You talked of the opera and *Vestris* as having *seen* them ; how was that possible in a Convent?

Miss VERNON.

By the mean of a little *art* and *good friends*, my dear. I accompanied the mother of one of our boarders to *Paris*, persuaded the Lady Abbess, though almost as old and grumpy as my grand-mamma, that she would offend mamma, if she refused my accepting the invitation of so great a lady as Madame la Comtesse de *Rosselle* ; under this idea, she consented, and for one fortnight I enjoyed all the pleasures of the *beau monde*.

Miss SELWYN.

How could you receive pleasure from any diversion obtained by the *meannefs* of *deceit* ? I should have hoped, my *Cecilia*, had had more *pride* than to *descend* to it. Seven years ago you would have *blushed* at only being supposed capable of such an action.

Miss

Miss VERNON.

You who have never gone beyond the pales of the village church-yard, nor heard precepts but from the *old fashioned* mouths of your *relations*, have no idea what young people will submit to when *pleasure* is in view; for *my part*, I think there is no harm in an *innocent deception*; and often *laugh* at the figure I made when I went into the Convent, a *little formal demure Miss*; *grandmamma's best girl*; *said my prayers night and morning*; preferred reading *good books* to the old lady, to a *game of romps*; and would not have told a *mensonge* for the world.

Miss SELWYN.

I am sorry to say any thing harsh to you, dear cousin, particularly in these first moments of our meeting; but indeed, if you continue to use *such* expressions, I must only keep you company when you are restrained by the presence of those relations whom you hold so cheap. What you have just said, must, however, be all mere *raillery*; when you are *serious*, I shall hear very *different* sentiments. from you.

Miss VERNON.

Though I do not thank you much for the *former* part of your speech, yet I cannot help telling you, that *my* sentiments *never differ*, for I disclaim every thing like *seriousness*; the age of sixteen was never made for *that*; it is the *prime* of *pleasure, gaiety and dress*. *Apropos*, I long to shew you the sweet elegant becoming ornaments I have brought home, if the *Barbares* at the *Custom-house* keep their odious hands from them.

Miss SELWYN.

I shall be much delighted with a sight of them, as the French are generally allowed to have great taste and elegance in dress.

Miss VERNON.

And when placed with *judgment*, I say no more.  
*Vous me comprenez?*

[Enter Master Vernon, who runs and kisses his sister.]

Miss VERNON.

How *impoli*, George! you should only *touch my cheek*.

Master

Master VERNON.

I am not a *Frenchman*, sister; nor do I desire to be one, that is more. Why, I never saw any body cut such a *queer figure* in my life as you do, all *frizzled* and *powdered*. I like my cousin a great deal better.

Miss VERNON.

With all my heart; *your* good opinion would only make me *dislike myself*. I wish dinner was ready, [*takes out a dirty looking knife.*] I long to exercise you, [*addressing it*] for I am very hungry.

Master VERNON.

And do you think grandmamma will suffer such a nasty looking knife as that to be used at the table she sits at? why, it would quite shock her.

Miss VERNON.

It is what I have used constantly these *three* years, and shall continue to *cut* with it in spite of all *she* can say to the contrary; I am not quite *vulgar* enough to *eat* with one, as I suppose *you* all do.

Master VERNON.

There you are mistaken, Mrs. *Frenchwoman*; I often wish my aunt's eyes behind her, because she



watches *me* so narrowly, for fear I should put any thing to my *mouth* with my knife; but then we are not *absurd* or *dirty* enough to use such a *nasty thing* as *that*.

Miss VERNON.

I wish you would hold your ridiculous tongue, and not talk of things you *cannot understand*. Go to *school*, that is the properest place for you.

Master VERNON.

Hold your tongue—who sent for *you* to give an *opinion*? I shall not submit to *you*, indeed.

Miss SELWYN.

Pray restrain yourselves, my dear cousins, I am extremely shocked to see such near relations *quarrelling*, and particularly, so soon after such a long separation.

Miss VERNON.

What right has he to *laugh* at *me*? I *will* use my knife if I *like* it.

Master VERNON.

And what right had you to call me *impoli*, or in plain *English*, *Brute*?

Miss

Miss SELWYN.

I beg you will compose yourselves. How much would your conduct distress all our parents, if they knew it ?

Miss VERNON.

Tell them of it with all my heart ; perhaps you will recommend *yourself* by it.

Miss SELWYN.

No one but *you*, cousin, would have supposed me capable of designed ill-nature. But you do not know what I *am*, and have forgot what I *was*.

Miss VERNON.

You can praise yourself, however, that I can perceive. A fine chance for happiness have I, to be *documented* by a *conceited cousin*, and a *boorish brother*. But I will never let mamma rest till she removes me from this hateful house.

Miss SELWYN.

You distress me greatly, *Cecilia*, by thus misconstruing my intentions. [*takes her hand with great affection,*] I am sure proving myself sincerely your friend will afford happiness to myself ; and I hope, this house, once so dear to you, and which you re-

gretted leaving when your mamma sent you abroad, will be as highly estimated as ever.

Miss VERNON.

That is a vain hope: when I liked this dull situation, I did not know better; but *now* I must *detest* every thing like *retirement*. That one fortnight at *Paris*, has spoilt me for any thing but *living in the world*.

Miss SELWYN.

So far from making *me* impatient to *see* the *world*, you render me *afraid* of *entering* it. What dreadful effects, to make one hate home, and the peace and quietness to be found there only! you cannot always be *amused* from morning till night.

Miss VERNON.

I am sure we were so at *Paris*, and wanted still more hours for amusement; but then to be sure, I was sadly fatigued, and did not recover it for many days after I returned to the Convent, but that was only for *want of use*.

Master VERNON.

Well, sister, I wish you would talk of something else besides your *outlandish* manner of passing your time, it would

it would do you more good to go and play at *trap-ball* with me.

Miss VERNON.

Keep your sentiments to yourself, sir; they are by no mean desirable in my opinion. What is the old lady dressing herself all this time? she does not shew much impatience to see me; but, perhaps, she is *beautifying*, ha! ha! [*Laughs.*]

Miss SELWYN.

I will enquire what is the matter; for my dear grandmamma's great age makes me constantly apprehensive about her. [*She rings the bell.*]

Miss VERNON.

You need not hurry her, *Teresa*, for I find no difficulty to smother my *impatience*.

Miss SELWYN.

I am sorry for it. [*Enter a footman.*] Have you heard any thing of my grandmamma, *John*?

JOHN.

She is now upon the stairs, miss, I believe she has been kept above by some complaint, because her maid went for drops.

[*He goes out.*]

Miss



Miss SELWYN, [*agitated.*]

You alarm me greatly ; but I will go and see her myself. [*As she is quitting the room, enter Sally.*]

SALLY.

My lady is gone into the dining parlour with your mammas, ladies, and desires your company there.

Miss SELWYN.

How is my grandmamma, Sally ? I hope not very ill ?

SALLY.

No, miss, only a little *faint*. But you are so soon *frightened*.

Miss VERNON.

*Frightened*, indeed ! I never heard such a fuss about an old woman in my life ; it is quite absurd.

SALLY.

O, Miss *Cecilia*, I am glad you are come home, the house will seem *alive* now.

Miss VERNON.

That it will, if my endeavours can make it so.

[*Sally is going to speak, but is interrupted by*

Miss

Miss SELWYN.

You need not stay here, Sally, we shall go to the dining parlour immediately. [*Sally goes out.*] How can you cousin encourage that impertinent girl to prate? it is a liberty she never dared to take with me.

Miss VERNON.

Keep your advice for those who will attend to it, I shall never be a listener. Come, let us go, that I may be made a show of.

[*They go out.*]

[*The Scene closes.*]

END of ACT II.

## A C T II.

S C E N E, *the Dining Parlour.*

[*Mrs. Vernon, Mrs. G. Vernon, Miss and Master Vernon, Mrs. and Miss Selwyn sitting round the table after dinner, eating fruit, &c.*]

*Master VERNON.*

I KNEW very well, sister, that you would not done to pull out that *nasty queer knife*, before grandmamma, notwithstanding what you said.

*Miss VERNON.*

I think, sir, I had enough of your impertinence before dinner ; I must claim my mamma's protection from any more of it.

*Mrs.*

Mrs. G. VERNON.

It is a shame, *George*, that you should quarrel with your sister so soon after your meeting.

Master VERNON.

O, you need not take *her* part; she wants no second, I assure you, mamma, she was quite a *match* for my cousin and me together before dinner.

Mrs. VERNON.

I am sorry, *Teresa*, to hear that you have been disputing, and wonder from whose example you could learn it?

Miss SELWYN.

Indeed, my dear grandmamma, I have not *deserved* your censure on this occasion; *George* quite mistakes.

Miss VERNON.

There is no occasion to *tell tales*. Though, to speak *truth*, we had a fine *battle of the tongues* amongst us; but that is nothing *new* to me.

Mrs. SELWYN.

But it is very new in *this house*, and what we never approve. *George*, to be sure, sometimes thinking himself *wiser* than any of *us*, prefers giving his opinion to hearing ours; however, we seldom spare him



him, for it is unpardonable, even in a rude unpolished school-boy to behave in that manner, but in young ladies, it proves a want of delicacy and sentiment. Fie, *Teresa*! I thought you had too much gentleness to be guilty of such an error.

[*Miss Selwyn appears to be quite distressed, but continues silent.*]

MISS VERNON.

We never passed a day in the convent without half a dozen quarrels amongst the boarders; by which mean I am so accustomed to them, that I could not live in *quietness* for the world. You look quite *ashamed* of it, cousin, why, I am not.

MRS. VERNON.

This is one of the blessed effects of the *foreign* education you have had; and your speech convinces me, that *you* alone were to blame; poor *Teresa* could not avoid being a *spectator*; but her distressed appearance plainly speaks she took no other part in the contention.

MISS VERNON.

I imagine, my cousin is to be supposed *always* in the *right*, because she was bred at home under your tuition,

tuition, grandmamma, and according to your precepts. But consider the change of fashions in the last sixty years, and how different young people are now to what they were formerly.

Mrs. VERNON.

It is with great concern I observe the alteration you mention ; but sixty years cannot make *absurdity* appear like *reason*, or *pertness*, like *understanding*.

Miss VERNON.

I suppose, if I was *demure*, *simple*, and *silent*, you would call me *modest*, and *well bred* ; but what use would it be to have *accomplishments* if I did not try to shew them?

Mrs. VERNON.

Do you then think, *Cecilia*, impertinent unmeaning remarks are proofs of knowledge ? you take the method to convince us of the contrary : *silence* might hide your *deficiency* ; there is no being mistaken when once you open your mouth.

Miss VERNON.

It is a little hard, that I may not speak of the customs which prevail among people with whom I have passed almost half my life ; but I suppose I am

prevented, for fear I should convince others that I know more than my *listeners*.

Mrs. VERNON.

Incorrigible girl! have you no affection? no feeling? no sense of duty?

Miss VERNON.

You do not give me any opportunity of shewing my sentiments. It is hard to be received with frowns after so long an absence, and all occasioned by that young *fripon* my brother.

Mrs. SELWYN.

My dear madam, let us wave all further argument. *George*, give your sister a reconciling kiss, and we will call another subject.

[*Master Vernon, just touches Miss Vernon's cheek, then speaks.*]

Master VERNON.

Was that done *gently* enough to please you, madame *Françoise*?

Mrs. G. VERNON.

Hush! *George*, I must not allow you to take such liberties with your sister, if you repeat it, I will  
instantly

instantly send you to school. Did you, *Teresa*, invite the young ladies to tea this afternoon?

*Miss SELWYN.*

I wrote notes to them, madam, as you directed, requesting their company to meet an old friend; they returned for answer, that they should be happy to wait on me, and would come early, according to my desire.

*Mrs. G. VERNON.*

I hope, my dears, you will not dispute before your visitors.

*Master VERNON.*

I shall not begin first. But I am determined to go into the room to see how *Cecilia*, behaves and what *frenchified airs* she puts on.

*Miss VERNON.*

I do not think it worth while to argue with such a rude boy as you are. Pray, cousin, who are the young ladies we are to see this afternoon?

*Miss SELWYN.*

*Miss Ward*, *Miss Franklin*, and *Miss Thurot*; the father of *Miss Thurot* is a French refugee; the other two ladies, you no doubt recollect?



Miss VERNON.

Come then, let us go into the drawing-room and prepare for them.

[*She runs out; Miss Selwyn curtesies to her friends, and follows her.*]

Mrs. VERNON.

Come, my good Mrs. Selwyn, lead me to the couch in the little parlour, that I may take my afternoon's sleep.

[*They go out.*]

Mrs. G. VERNON alone.

With what difficulty have I smothered my grief and disappointment. Alas! *Cecilia's* temper is quite spoiled. O that I had followed her grandmother's advice, and educated her with her cousin; but headstrong and opinionated people generally suffer as I do. What steps can I take to *undo* what seven years seem to have fatally completed? had but her father's life been spared, he would have saved *her* from *perversion*, and *me* from the fatal instrument of being *it*. Why did I follow my own infatuated opinion? Too prophetic mother, all your apprehensions are verified! I must go to my chamber, and try to compose my mind, it is at present greatly disturbed. [*She goes out.*]

SCENE,

SCENE *changes to the Drawing-Room.*

[*Miss Selwyn, Miss and Master Vernon.*]

*Miss* SELWYN.

I long to hear you play on the harpsichord, *Cecilia*;  
I shall hope to improve myself, by catching your  
graces.

*Miss* VERNON.

I suppose you have an *English master* and *English music*?

*Miss* SELWYN.

I play of all kinds; my master is still the same  
you began with, and is reckoned a remarkably  
good one.

*Miss* VERNON.

He may be thought so *here*, but I was obliged to  
*unlearn* all he taught me; my French master told  
me, I had been most execrably instructed.

*Miss* SELWYN.

That he might say to answer some purpose of his  
own. Perhaps an *English* performer may not possess  
the spirit and brilliancy of a French one; but I

M 3

have

have been told the latter are apt to neglect laying a solid foundation, which is the method our good masters always observe.

Miss VERNON.

I really know nothing about the matter; and I never give myself the trouble to think: *Monfieur de Brun* was a very polite man, and always praised me.

[*Master Vernon, looking out of the window.*]

Master VERNON.

Here come our visitors. Now, *Cecilia*, for some of your French airs and graces?

Miss VERNON.

I wish I could transport you to the antipodes; you are the most impertinent boy I ever knew.

[*Enter the three young ladies; Miss Selwyn advances to meet them with great politeness, and introduces them to Miss Vernon.*]

Miss SELWYN.

Miss *Ward*, Miss *Franklin*, Miss *Thurot*, need I name the young lady to whom I am introducing you?

Miss VERNON.

*Oui, certainement*; Am I not *entierement* grown out of their knowledge?

Miss

Miss WARD.

Miss Vernon, I rejoice to see you.

Miss FRANKLIN.

It is certainly your old playfellow ! How glad I am you are returned home ! [*They advance and embrace her.*]

Miss THUROT.

Though I have not had the pleasure of seeing you before, yet I am a sharer with your other friends, Miss Vernon, in the happiness your return gives them, for I have heard you so frequently spoken of, that I longed to see you.

Miss VERNON.

*Je suis ravi a ce moment*, which once more unites me à mes belles amies, among whom I am rejoiced to reckon you. [*addressing Miss Thurot.*]

Miss WARD.

How happy you must be to come home ! La, my dear, was not a convent a detestable place ? from what I have read and heard of them, I would not go to one for the world.

Miss



## The CONTRAST,

Miss VERNON.

I cannot pretend to say it was *bien charmant*; but I shall now reap the advantage by having been educated in a superior style.

Miss FRANKLIN.

I doubt not your accomplishments, Miss *Vernon*. But you must be very clever indeed to exceed our dear *Teresa*, who is reckoned a perfect prodigy.

Miss SELWYN. [*blushing.*]

Pray do not bestow such undeserved praises on me; I do not wish to vie with any one.

Miss WARD.

Well, you are very clever to be sure, at least we are told so; but I think Miss *Vernon* will be more to my taste, she seems so *lively*.

Miss VERNON.

Me? *je suis toujours gaie*. I have overturned the heads of the whole family in the short time since my return.

Master VERNON.

It is time then you settled your own, for if you do not take care it will all drop off presently.

Miss

*Miss* VERNON.

I wish, sir, you were gone to school.

*Master* VERNON.

I dare say you do; and I shall be very ready to go, that I may entertain my school-fellows with an imitation of some of your *grimaces*.

*Miss* VERNON.

I do not mind you, that is one comfort. What shall we do to divert ourselves?

*Miss* THUROT.

Any thing that is agreeable to these young ladies will be so to me. But I am so fond of *music*, that I should prefer that entertainment to any other.

*Miss* SELWYN.

My cousin, I hope, will not refuse to begin.

*Miss* VERNON.

I would rather hear somebody else first. That mad boy has agitated me I cannot sing yet.

*Miss* SELWYN.

Then I will set the example in hope of having it followed, and that my playing may not appear to the disadvantage it must do after hearing a better performer.

[*Miss*

*[Miss Selwyn plays and sings, during which time Miss Thurot and Miss Franklin, stand by her listening. Miss Vernon and Miss Ward whisper and laugh. Master Vernon eyes them very archly; when it is over, Miss Selwyn rises.]*

Miss THUROT.

You play enchantingly, Miss Selwyn, I wish I could perform as well, my papa would be delighted to hear you; he is amazingly fond of music, and very anxious for me to excel in it.

Miss VERNON.

Indeed, cousin, you are a great proficient, and sing à merveille!

*[Master Vernon bursts into a loud laugh.]*

Master VERNON.

Pray how much did you hear of it? for you have been louder than the music.

Miss WARD.

Come, Miss Vernon, you must absolutely play now, I am dying to hear you.

Miss VERNON *[rises with great affectation.]*

I will with pleasure oblige you. *[Takes a French song out of her pocket; then seats herself, and begins playing:]*

*playing, during which she throws herself into attitudes like foreigners. Soon after she begins, Master Vernon, who has observed her sometime, goes out, then returns with a looking glass, which he places suddenly before her.]*

*Miss VERNON.*

What is that for, sir?

*Master VERNON.*

To shew you what a *monkey* is like. Why, I never saw any thing else *like you*.

*Miss VERNON.*

This is too much to submit to, making me break off in the finest part of the song, and disappointing the young ladies.

*Master VERNON.*

Do not make yourself uneasy about that, I will entertain the ladies quite in your style. [*He imitates her action and manner of singing.*]

*Miss VERNON, [bursts into tears.]*

I cannot submit to such cruel usage. Why, if you must play ridiculous tricks, did you not chuse *Teresa* instead of me to make your subject?

*Master*



Master VERNON.

Because she did nothing *ridiculous*. Why, there was not one of your *chères amies*, that did not laugh at you.

Miss VERNON.

Insufferable insolence! I will complain to my mamma if you persist in abusing me.

Miss SELWYN.

Pray, *George*, forbear, indeed you are wrong to distress your sister.

Miss VERNON.

It is impossible I should *play*, or do any thing else *well* whilst he is ridiculing me.

Master VERNON.

It is only owing to my *ignorance*. Consider I never saw a *frenchified belle* before. Miss *Thurot* was born in France, why does not she behave like you if it is the fashion of that nation?

Miss THUROT.

No, sir, I was born and educated in England. my parents were French.

Master

Master VERNON.

Well then, if it was right to *squeeze about* like my sister, to be sure your papa and mamma would have taught *you* to do it.

Miss WARD.

Pray, Master *Vernon*, do not say any more, you quite spoil our amusement. Come, let one of us play while the rest dance.

Miss VERNON.

*De tout mon cœur.* I am now again ready for any thing *lively*.

Master VERNON.

I hope I shall have the honor of dancing with every lady but my sister. If she dances as she plays, I can never hope to possess perfection enough for her partner.

Miss SELWYN.

Who will begin?—Accept me as a fidler. [*She sits down to the harpsichord and plays a minuet.*]  
[*Master Vernon takes out Miss Ward and Miss Franklin, and dances alternately with them.*]

Master VERNON.

I am quite tired.—Come let the *French ladies* dance together.

Miss THUROT.

If Miss *Vernon* will accept an indifferent partner, I am at her service.

[*Whilst they are settling themselves, George slyly pins a cracker on the back of his sister's gown; just as she is doing the pas grave, at giving her second hand, he contrives, by means of a lighted paper, to set fire to it, and it goes off with a great bounce; she falls down in a fright, and all the rest run about screaming; he stands and laughs most violently.*]

Miss SELWYN.

Indeed, cousin *George*, you carry your jokes to a length infinitely beyond prudence; what have you done? my dear *Cecilia* suffer me to assist you in rising, I hope you are not hurt.

[*A bell rings violently.*]

Miss VERNON.

There is my grandmamma alarmed I dare say. What account, sir, will you give of yourself to her?

Master

Master VERNON.

I shall not trouble myself to give her any. I never heard a cracker go off so well in my life.

[Laughs and holds his sides.]

[Enter Sally.]

SALLY.

What is the matter in this room, ladies? my lady is excessively alarmed, and thinks some accident has happened.

Miss SELWYN.

No person is hurt, Sally. The noise was owing to one of *George's* frolicks. Pray hasten to relieve my grandmamma's fears.

[She goes out.]

Miss VERNON.

I wonder, *Teresa*, you, who are so very attentive to your *old adviser*, do not go and give her an account of every thing that is past.

Miss SELWYN.

If any pleasant circumstance occurred, I should certainly put myself very forward to relate it; but in the present case, *silence* is best. To speak *truth* would pain her; and to utter *falsehood*, is *meanness*.



Miss WARD.

Well, I see no harm in deceiving an *old woman*. I am sure my grandmamma does not hear above *one* true word in *ten* from me; indeed, I do not trouble myself to talk much to her; for I hate to satisfy her tiresome questions.

Miss THUROT.

I am surprised to hear you say so, for I think she and Mrs. *Vernon* are the most pleasing old ladies I ever saw, they always have such a benignant smile, and are so condescending to young people.

Miss VERNON.

The *smiles* of old women are, in my eyes, only *sneers*. But it is the fashion to look upon our old ladies as oracles, so we must submit to the *hearing* them; but further than this, I cannot go.

Miss SELWYN.

Well, I own, there is something so *mild* and *good* in my grandmamma's appearance, that when I am with her, I cannot help thinking she is a being superior to the generality of the world.

Miss

Miss FRANKLIN.

And so she is. I am sure I hear her praised wherever I go; they say she is both *wise* and *good*.

Miss THUROT.

I declare, I am never so happy as when permitted to pass a few hours with her, and always return home with some new sentiments, collected from her conversation, that make me wiser and better.

Master VERNON.

Well, ladies, I think you are rather on a *dry* subject. Have you no new plays?

Miss VERNON.

I bar every thing like *play* in your company. You have almost *killed* me with your evil tricks.

Master VERNON.

So much the *better*; then you will never *dance* and *sing* again.

Miss SELWYN.

Pray, George, recollect yourself; indeed, you forget that you ought to *protect* your sister from *insolence*, not make her the *subject* of it.

*Master* VERNON.

Well then, *peace for ever*, I proclaim it. Come, sister, shake hands. I should not have thought of doing what I have done, but to please and entertain you, because you boasted of having such *uncommon spirits*.

*Miss* VERNON.

And so I have, *George*, if I might be permitted to indulge them. I have not been in the garden yet since my return, and long to see the improvements.

*Miss* SELWYN.

We had better then go immediately, or the evening will close and prevent us; on our return tea will be ready.

*Master* VERNON.

I shall go and fly my kite then during your walk, for I would by no means interrupt your agreeable conversation.

*Miss* WARD.

Do as you please, sir; we are not *ambitious* of your company.

*Miss*

*Miss* VERNON.

Pray do not begin with him, he seems inclined to be quiet, and let us keep him so.

*Master* VERNON.

Your servant, ladies.

[*He goes out.*]

*Miss* FRANKLIN.

Here are our calashes. I am ready.

*Miss* THUROT.

So are we.

*Miss* VERNON.

We can take ours as we go through the hall.

[*As they are going out, enter Sally.*]

SALLY.

My lady desires to see *Miss Selwyn*, and one of the other young ladies.

*Miss* VERNON.

Not *me*, I dare say,

SALLY.

No, *Miss*, one of the *visitors*.

*Miss* FRANKLIN.

May I be indulged with the honor of accompanying you. *Teresa*?

*Miss*



Miss THUROT.

A little *French quickness* would have stood my friend now, for you are beforehand with me *Amelia*.

Miss WARD.

Then you had better both go. Miss *Vernon* and I are ready to excuse you.

Miss VERNON.

*Allons donc!*—Come let us hasten, or it will be dark.

[*They go out.*]

Miss THUROT.

May I take the liberty of going with you to your grandmamma's apartment, *Teresa*?

Miss SELWYN.

Undoubtedly ; and you will make her very happy in your company.

Miss THUROT.

Thus kindly encouraged, I cannot resist the opportunity of enjoying so great a pleasure.

[*They go out.*]

END of ACT II.

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A C T    I I I.

SCENE, *the Drawing-Room. The tea things set.*

[*Mrs. G. Vernon and Mrs. Selwyn.*]

*Mrs. SELWYN.*

I HAVE sent the dear girls in quest of their companions, and when they return will make the tea.

*Mrs. VERNON.*

I am in no hurry. You are not well, daughter, I fear.

*Mrs. G. VERNON.*

My mind, dear madam, is greatly disturbed.  
[*She bursts into tears.*] The consequences of my strange infatuation have, I fear, quite changed the once gentle mind of my poor *Cecilia*.

*Mrs.*

Mrs. VERNON.

If you are convinced it wants *correcting* my fears abate; she is *young*, and may yet be taught to overcome the prejudices of education, difficult as I fear the task may prove; but I own, I apprehended you would be as *blind* to her *errors* as you were to her *interest*, when you determined on giving her a foreign education.

Mrs. G. VERNON.

You know not, my dear mother, the misery that I now experience, for having obstinately persevered in an opinion so fatal to my child. O! that I alone suffered! unhappy girl! my fatal impropriety has perverted her heart, and deprived her of those finer feelings, which are the greatest ornaments of the female mind.

Mrs. SELWYN.

Comfort yourself, dear *Louisa*, your daughter is not old in error; the very acquisitions she so much plumes herself upon, will only turn to her mortification. Introduce her among amiable people; their example will shew her the absurdity of her own conceit, and teach her how trifling outward accomplishments are, when unaccompanied by diffidence and modesty.

Mrs. VERNON.

Nor will it be amiss to let her sometimes mix with young people as improperly educated as herself. The contrast will be striking, and more convincing than precept; she must be led by gentleness, by attentively watching every turn of her mind, we may imperceptibly implant that solid virtue we wish to cultivate.

Mrs. G. VERNON.

I ought not to *despair* when I have such kind and able assistants; but I do not deserve, after my miserable mismanagement, the happiness of seeing my daughter like her cousin.

Mrs. VERNON.

Subject as we all are to errors, it is our duty to excuse them. Parents who love their children, certainly wish to fix on the properest mode of education, and such as they think will lead them to the good they wish them to gain. But here the parent's mind betrays the child, and the worldly minded cannot expect such blessed effects as generally reward those who have a view to higher considerations.

Mrs.



• Mrs. G. VERNON.

But I, madam, had better advisers, and might have escaped the rock so plainly pointed out to me.

Mrs. VERNON.

You are young, and perhaps thought an old woman's advice the effect of age and spleen; but that is past. Let us now endeavour to *overcome* what we could not *prevent*. You, *Louisa*, must be the great actor; your daughter will not regard the admonitions of her aunt and me, unless they are supported by you. The first thing, therefore, you have to determine on, is *steadiness*; upon no account be led to *smile*, or encourage any of her *lively sallies*, (as she terms them,) which at best are only *pertness* and *flippancy*.

Mrs. SELWYN.

My sister, who is so different herself, will not, I think, allow in *Cecilia* such wretched meanness, by some called, *wit*, which consists in ridiculing the worthy; some, because they are *old*; others, because they are *grave*; and others, because they are *ugly*; to such persons, an *old face*, a *large nose*, a *wide mouth*.

*mouth, little eyes, &c.* will furnish subjects for mirth during a whole afternoon, to those who do not consider the *wickedness* of remarks which reflect on the divine hand that formed persons with these imperfections, not on the unfortunate possessors of them.

Mrs. G. VERNON.

Indeed, *Charlotte*, I detest such kind of conversation as much as you can do; for it is totally inconsistent with that commendable sensibility which ought to make a part of the female character. Persons who have a turn to this kind of ridicule, must either be insensibly thoughtless or else cruel and malicious.

Mrs. VERNON.

*Pertness*, in my opinion, is detestable. How often have I seen *low ridicule* put the *worthy* and the *diffident* out of countenance, while many stood smiling round, enjoying the jest, and the confusion it produced.

Mrs. G. VERNON.

Upon those occasions frequently have I prayed, that my children might escape such unworthy senti-

ments; and now, by my mode of education, they seem to be the characteristic of them both.

Mrs. SELWYN.

I am not alarmed on *George's* account; he has a great deal of *good sense* under the roughness of a school-boy; and I think, the scene that passed this afternoon, which Miss *Franklin* really described in a very diverting manner, will be a mean of shewing *Cecilia*, the absurdity of her conduct.

Mrs. VERNON.

Certainly; while he ridiculed his sister's folly, he shewed a distinguishing mind, for he did not attempt ridiculing any of the other young ladies.

Mrs. G. VERNON.

But surely he ought not to be encouraged in treating *Cecilia* with contempt, and making her the subject of mirth to *himself* and *friends*.

Mrs. SELWYN.

Undoubtedly not; we must endeavour to convince him of this impropriety and teach him to correct it; but yet, his behaviour may be made a useful lesson to his sister.

Mrs.

Mrs. G. VERNON.

I wish she may be prevailed on to receive it as such.—But alas! she seems very little disposed to avail herself of any mode of instruction.

Mrs. SELWYN.

Let us hope the best my dear sister. The follies we have this day observed in *Cecilia*, shew a *perverted understanding*, it must be owned, but do not prove that she has a *bad heart*. I wish much to know whether she has escaped perversion in a very material point—I mean *Religion*.—The danger in this respect, has all along appeared to me so great, that I could never think of it without horror.

Mrs. VERNON.

It is a subject we must at least for a time avoid talking upon to her, though of infinitely the greatest consequence; our own attention will soon enable us to make every requisite observation, and instruct us in the best methods to pursue.

Mrs. G. VERNON.

I shudder to reflect on what a precipice my beloved *Cecilia* stands. O, that my prayers may avail to avert this most poignant misfortune! I must enter



upon the subject as soon as possible, for I am all anxiety to know *what my child is*.

Mrs. SELWYN.

Keep up your spirits, however, my dear sister; you must have all your thoughts about you, and endeavour to take the lead in every conversation at which *Cecilia* is present.

Mrs. G. VERNON.

I will certainly follow your advice, and study to retrieve my past errors. Wonderful! that I should persist for seven years in one which deprived me of my greatest joy and comfort; for never mother loved a child more than I do my *Cecilia*; and, but for what I thought her advantage, she should never have been out of my sight. Often have I envied *you*, sister, in having *Teresa* with you, and should certainly have sent for my daughter, but that a *false shame* restrained me from it; though I always *dreaded*, as much as *longed*, for her return.

Mrs. VERNON.

I think, daughter, the expence of education abroad is nearly as much as at home; and if so,  
what

what reason can there be for banishing a child so many years?

Mrs. G. VERNON.

Indeed, madam, *Cecilia's* education has cost me even more than it would have done in *England*. The first year the demands for it were moderate, and according to the agreement I made; but they have increased since more than I wish to own; for this confession only adds to the inexcusableness of my conduct. The superior of the convent, solemnly engaged to leave her free in respect to religion; but, disappointed as I am in other respects, I can have little hopes that her mind remains untainted in this particular.

Mrs. SELWYN [*moves to the tea table.*]

I hear the voices of the young people, and will therefore prepare for them.

Mrs. VERNON.

Do, my dear, perhaps during tea we may draw from *Cecilia* opinions that will instruct us for our future proceedings.

[Enter Miss Selwyn, Miss Franklin, and Miss Thurot.]

Mrs. SELWYN.

Are you come alone, ladies?

Miss SELWYN.

We could not find my cousin and Miss Ward; but as we entered the house heard their voices and George's very loud by the filbert hedge.

Mrs. VERNON.

They are coming. I hear a strange noise.

[Enter Master Vernon with a handful of false hair in one hand, dragging in his sister with the other, her cap off, her curls unpinned, and hanging about her ears, and she in tears, Miss Ward follows taking her part.]

Master VERNON [laughing, and holding up the false hair.]

Master VERNON.

Look here! I have found her out! I knew, all that immense head could not belong to one person.

Miss VERNON.

Am I not to find protection any where? rescue me, I beseech you, dear mamma, from this cruel boy.

Mrs.

Mrs. G. VERNON [*separates them.*]

For shame, George, is this the treatment due from a brother to a sister? you who should protect her from the insolence of others, instead of setting such an example. What would your worthy father say, if he could look out of his grave, and see his representative acting so differently from what he himself would do?

Master VERNON.

I did not mean to *hurt* her, but she would not own her having *false hair*, so I was determined to find it out, and I discovered her nicely.

Mrs. VERNON.

It is in vain to reason with you, sir; but you shall go to school to-morrow, and never come home till you have learnt to behave with more propriety. Your sister's foibles, however great, ought not to be subjects for *ridicule*, but *pity*, to her nearest relations.

Master VERNON.

Well, I am sure, *she* spares none of her relations; for they all have their turn to be laughed at,

Mrs.



Mrs. VERNON.

I am sorry to hear she is capable of so much giddiness. If she did set you the example, George, she has suffered sufficiently for it and I am concerned, to find, that as you had discernment enough to distinguish how *unamiable* it was in *her*, you had not sufficient prudence to prevent your falling into the same error. [*During this conversation, the young ladies adjust Miss Vernon's dress.*]

Miss VERNON.

I am sure my brother has tormented me ever since I entered this house. I think it is very hard I cannot find peace at *home*.

Mrs. SELWYN.

Indeed, it is, my poor *Cecilia*; nor can I think you could deserve such treatment by any expressions of your own.

Miss VERNON [*looks ashamed.*]

Whatever I have said, aunt, was only in *jest*.

Master VERNON.

Well, it was the same with me. I meant no harm, only a little diversion.

Mrs.

Mrs. VERNON.

You have both been extremely to blame ; and your punishment, *Cecilia*, though inflicted by a wrong person, is such as may shew you the impropriety of that low mean opinion, which leads you, when in the ridiculing vein, to spare neither friend nor relation.

Miss VERNON.

It is very hard, mamma, that I must not speak a word, but my brother will repeat it to my disadvantage.

Mrs. G. VERNON.

Say nothing improper, and you need not fear a repetition of it. Do by others as you would have them do by you, and you will no longer be guilty of a fault that must render your company unpleasant to every one.

Miss VERNON.

La ! mamma, one cannot be expected *to think* at my age as *you* do. I often speak without any meaning at all.

Mrs. VERNON.

And by that mean *wound* where you should be *kind*. The tricks your brother has played you *he* did *unthinkingly* ; yet you do not accept that excuse from him as a compensation.

Miss VERNON.

No, certainly, because he *hurt* me, and made me appear *abjurd* before company.

Mrs. VERNON.

Yet you can with pleasure, by flippancy, put the *modest* out of countenance, merely because they are without the same talents to retort.

Miss VERNON.

I never *thought* about it before, nor was I ever corrected upon the subject, but was always encouraged by my companions to make them laugh.

Mrs. VERNON.

You have more excuse than any of these young ladies could have for the same fault, because you have been deprived of good advisers; but I hope to convince you, how very disagreeable such kind of low wit must render you.

[Miss Ward appears confused.]

Miss VERNON.

But you will allow, grandmamma, that the natural liveliness of young people may sometimes lead them to *say* and *do* things they ought not.

Mrs.

Mrs. VERNON.

I make every allowance for the inexperience and volatility of youth ; but when a fault proceeds from an *unfeeling heart*, it is, in my eyes, unpardonable; and I have no idea that a person of a good disposition can, *at any age*, take pleasure in putting another out of countenance, merely from thinking they have said a good thing. As one of my favorite author's says \*,

" *Who for the poor renown of being smart,*

" *Would leave a sting within another's heart ?*"

Mrs. SELWYN.

George, give the ladies their tea ; you shall wait upon us this afternoon.

[*Master Vernon hands the tea.*]

Master VERNON.

I am very happy to be employed ; and what is more, I am sorry for my behaviour to my sister, and will never act so again to any one. I had no design to be ill-natured, though it appeared that I had. [*He goes to her, and takes her hand very affectionately.*] Come, *Cecilia*, you must forgive me.

\* *Young's Universal Passion.*



Miss VERNON.

Most cordially, *George*, and I thank you for your excuses. I am quite ashamed of my own conduct, which drew upon me your censure.

Master VERNON.

Indeed, *Cecilia*, without a *jest*, you do not appear half so well as these other young ladies. I should not find fault with you if you were like them.

Miss VERNON.

Well, sir, you need not begin again.

Mrs. G. VERNON, *interrupting her.*]

Now I must take my son's part. He has indeed given you most excellent advice. Your *spirits* appear *assumed*, and not *natural*. Some young people are livelier than others; and, when it is the bent of their dispositions, their liveliness is very pleasing; but you, *Cecilia*, when a child were always *grave*; your present mode of conduct does not, therefore, fit easy upon you.

Miss VERNON, [*after a pause.*]

My dear mamma, I will confess my inward mind to you. I was so unhappy in the convent, that  
had

had I not assumed this frivolous manner of behaviour I should have fretted myself to death. You were too distant to hear my complaints. I was not permitted to write to you. Habit familiarised nonsense; and I thought it right on my return to appear as I had done abroad, that I might be unlike every one bred in *England*. I shall endeavour to resume my natural temper, though your instruction will be necessary to remind me when I forget myself.

Mrs. G. Vernon [*looks delighted, and takes her hand.*]

Mrs. G. VERNON.

With pleasure I accept the office you appoint, and will be your monitor on all necessary occasions.

Mrs. VERNON.

Come, and let me embrace my beloved child, the dear offspring of an excellent son. Your last speech has given me a joy I little expected to feel from your late appearance. [*They embrace and shed tears.*]

Mrs. SELWYN.

I too must share these caresses, and tell my dear *Cecilia*, I love her with a mother's fondness.

Mrs. G. VERNON.

Had you been her mother she would not have been thrown on such rocks as I placed in her way; but she is rescued from them, for which I return my unfeigned thanks where due.

Miss SELWYN.

I hope, my dear cousin, you will now love me as well as ever, and let us henceforth be friends and sisters.

Miss VERNON.

That I will, my dear *Teresa*, and with joy accept your kind invitation; though I own, with blushes, the hope of *out-doing you*, made me purchase that false hair which produced my shame, and now my happiness.

Miss WARD.

Do not blame yourself, or your education too much, dear Miss *Vernon*, since you are kindly pardoned. I have always practised the same flippancy; but from this moment will endeavour to divest myself of it, and will never treat my grandmamma improperly again.

Mrs.

Mrs. SELWYN.

An excellent resolution my dear, and I doubt not your keeping it. We will have the tea equipage removed, and then proceed to something more like amusement than the past conversation has been. [*The bell is rung, a footman enters, and goes out with the tea things.*]

Miss FRANKLIN.

I cannot wish for any entertainment that deprives us of the instruction which the conversation of the present company. always conveys, in which I learn sentiments I hope never to forget.

Miss THUROT.

I always lament losing a moment which might be so well spent.

Mrs. VERNON.

You are very polite young ladies, with such a disposition your society will be desirable to people of all ages. But there is time for all things. Youth is the season for gaiety; enjoy it properly, only act with discretion; then you may look forward to a peaceable old age, unembittered by regret for mispent time.



*Miss* THUROT.Pray, *Miss* Vernon, did you go to mass?*Miss* VERNON.

Not constantly; but I sometimes went, and was forced to attend all hours of devotion in the convent, except during the night, those I was excused from.

*Mrs.* G. VERNON, [*in an agitation.*]

And how did you like it?

*Miss* VERNON.

I was pleased with the solemnity of their worship; and still, I must confess, my dear mamma, that I rather feel a bias towards a religion which, notwithstanding the promises that were made to you to the contrary, those who had the care of my education took so much pains to inculcate; and had it not been for the urgent desire I felt to return to *England*, I certainly should have professed myself a Roman Catholic; but I knew I should by this mean cut myself off from my family and dearest connections, therefore, resolved to resist all importunities; and the levity of conduct which I assumed, (though highly blameable) was thus

far

far serviceable to me, that it left me little time to attend to any serious subject; for, except during the time of divine service, and whilst I was receiving grave lectures, I seldom thought on religion at all.

Mrs. G. VERNON.

What a fortunate escape have you had. Oh, how my heart reproaches me for the danger I have exposed you to!

Mrs. VERNON.

Do not, my dear daughter, afflict yourself too much for an error, which, I trust, is not irreparable. I hope, from the comparison which *Cecilia*, now she is of an age to distinguish, will be able to make between our *rational* service and the unmeaning pageantry of the Romish Church, she will easily incline to give preference to the former; and that we shall be able to eradicate the false prejudices she has unhappily imbibed.

Miss VERNON.

Indeed, my dear grandmamma, I will with pleasure attend to the instructions of you and the rest of my good friends.—I am very ignorant, but I yield myself to your guidance.

*Mrs.* VERNON.

Your friends will have pleasure in the task; and I am thankful that you have but little more than ignorance to overcome. How much worse might it not have been?

*Mrs.* G. VERNON.

In the midst of my bitter regret, a happy prospect presents itself before me. Your advice, dear mother, shall in future have its due influence with me, and, I hope, with mine; and may Heaven grant you length of days for our comfort!

*Mrs.* VERNON.

Whilst my life is spared, I wish to make it as useful as possible. But, whenever I go, there is no fear but your good sense, which enables you to perceive your late error, will keep you in the path you should tread in, as much for your own sake, as for these dear childrens whose guide you must be.

*Master* VERNON.

I do not know what ails me, but I am ready to cry; and am sorry for having been at times so pert to all my relations.

*Mrs.*

*Mrs. SELWYN.*

Well said, my dear boy, a fault handsomely acknowledged claims forgiveness, and I doubt not, your proving as great a comfort to us all as our beloved *Cecilia*.

*Master VERNON.*

Thank you aunt, for your good opinion. Desire mamma to let me have two or three holidays, and I will not for a long time intrude on her goodness.

*Mrs. G. VERNON.*

Upon that condition I grant your request; I like to indulge you, *George*, but must keep you more strictly to your learning, for I fear coming home so often has interfered with your Greek and Latin.

*Master VERNON.*

Not very much, mamma. But, indeed, I will take more pains in future.

*Mrs. SELWYN.*

By way of composing our spirits, what say you to a few minuets? our footman plays a decent fiddle; he is in the hall.

*Mrs.*



*Mrs. G. VERNON.*

I am obliged to you for the proposal, sister, and hope my dear mother will give the young people an applauding smile.

*Mrs. VERNON.*

With pleasure. Only to avoid catching cold I will sit in my little parlour and look through the glass door at them.

*Mrs. SELWYN.*

Go then, my dears, and see that every thing is in readiness, and desire *John* to rosin his bow, for I think you will exercise it.

*[The young people all go out.]*

*Mrs. G. VERNON.*

What an undeservedly happy woman am I! and how has this blest hour relieved my heart from agony too great to be long endured!

*Mrs. VERNON.*

Your future attention to your children's welfare will, I hope, ensure you a continuance of your present happy prospects, and bless us in their rising virtues.

*Mrs.*

Mrs. SELWYN.

We ought with heart-felt thankfulness to acknowledge, that all our present comfort arises from the over-ruling hand of Providence; which alone preserved our dear child from absolute perversion. But let not any parent be encouraged from hence to expose theirs to the same temptation, as they cannot know what the event may be.

Mrs. VERNON.

Though this dear child had not been entirely neglected in her infancy from an idea of her being too young to receive religious instructions, yet what might have become of her when transported into a foreign land, before any good principle had taken root in her mind?

[Enter a Footman.]

FOOTMAN.

Every thing is ready, madam, and the ladies beg me to tell you they are impatient to begin.

Mrs. G. VERNON.

We will attend them immediately. [Footman goes out.] Come, dear mother and sister, let me lead you to a scene of innocent festivity.

Mrs.

*Mrs. VERNON.*

With inexpressible delight do I accompany you, and am thankful that I have lived to see this day, in which my family are again collected, and my fears for one dear branch of it happily removed,

*[They lead Mrs. Vernon out,*



T H E E N D.